COUSIN CLARISSA.: A SEQUEL TO "THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER THE ELMS." CHAPTER I.
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COUSIN CLARISSA.

A SEQUEL TO "THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER THE ELMS."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CHAPTER I.

Swamscott, June 1st, 1853.

You see Joseph Alexander is here; and to-day I threw cold water on him. He jumped, said—"what will you do next, Clarissa Jackson?" and brushed the water-drops from his coat sleeve and hair.

Joseph Alexander is pale, has a mouth with drooping corners; wide, thin cheeks and dull eyes. He has sore throat often and headache. He don't like the world very well, or any part of it; has no patience with those who shut doors with a clang, or let drafts in upon him. He is, in short, cross and sick. His father, who is Grandpapa Jackson's neighbor at Amesbury, and who is a hard, rich old man, sent him over here that the learned and skilful Dr. Jackson may make him well.

"H'm!" he says to my papa, "I could tell my father that I shall never be well, to stay well, until I am done with that little tight law-office I hate it! I have always hated everything but being in the air."

This makes papa look thoughtful; for this is what Grandpapa Jackson said here yesterday. "He has always hated study, especially study of the law. He has wanted to be running back and forth, like a free squirrel. He wanted it because he needed it, of course;,but his father, who only knows how to get money, *because* he wanted to stir, kept him down to his books, when he was a boy, with a sort of hot-air pressure, I told him better. But there is no such a thing as getting an old crotchet out of his head, or a new one in. He's a stupid thing. The fact is," pursued grandpapa, "Joseph ought to have been left to straggle along in an easy way to authorship. He has the right kind of blood in his veins for this; his great-grandfather on his mother's side, and his grandfather on his father's, both wrote poetry and had it printed. Pretty good poetry too, it was, for those days, and to be made in the midst of all the cumbersome tendencies of their hard working lives."

Grandpapa said that—now here comes poor Alexander dragging himself along into this room. He don't know that I am here, or he wouldn't come. He knows that this room is always dusky and cool, in the heat of the day; and in a far corner of the house where few come, and that a wide lounge and pillows are here.

Yes; he sees me now and stops short at the threshold. My back is a little toward him. I shall pretend that I do not see him. My pen shall go faster, more noisily than ever; then he will come in and lie down, perhaps. He comes; he crosses the room on tip-toe, still, as if he were a sly little mouse. He lies down; he arranges the pillows; he finishes by covering his face with the Gazette. I will let him be until he gets well into the midst of his self-congratulations, that, for once, he is near me without being in any way plagued by me; and then I will come upon him; not in a pouncing way, like an eagle; but meekly like a tame robin. His cushions are not quite right. There, that is better. He settles down now, drawing a long breath of comfort.

"Alexan—Esquire Alexander."

"What?" growling. "What do you want of Esquire Alexander?"

"I was thinking when you came in of what Grandpapa Jackson said that you did when you could just begin to speak a few easy words plain. Do you remember? You had been into school one day, where you heard them reciting the verbs."

"Well, what did I do?"

"You puzzled your head over it after you got home, and at last made it out—'are I, were I, is I, be I; sometimes be I, sometimes de I!"

"Have you got hold of that nonsense? I wonder they should remember it."

"It was worth remembering. Then, when you were a little older, a neighbor killed a calf one day. You went out and sat on a rock-heap in your father's field, and made this great couplet—

> "Why did they slew their king?
> Why to the Senate did they him bring?"

"Do you remember?"

"Yes."

"I expect you ought to be a poet."

"Oh, that is nonsense." I know, however, by

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the sound of his voice that he is pleased. Or half pleased. He is never more than that.

"Now take your comfort. I shall write. I shan't speak to you again, 'Squire Alexander."

"Not if I speak to you?"

"No, sir."

"H'm! then you are an odder thing than even 'Squire Alexander is. His neighbors all call him 'an odd fish.' And I suppose he is," rearranging his cushions, and once more drawing the Gazette over his face. He draws it over close; he has done with me, I see; but I must plague him.

"What do you think of the British nation, Alexander?"

He guffaws; he don't know what to do with himself. He says—"what do I think of the British—ha, ha, ha!—of the British nation? as if it were a walnut; a small-sized walnut—ha, ha. You are queer. But be so good as to let me be after this."

"Yes, I will."

And I will. I will go over to Uncle Hurlbut's to see Amy, Amy's husband and Amy's baby. This is baby's first visit to the house of its grandparents; and if the President had come instead, so great rejoicing would not have been held.

"Good-bye, Alexander—pleasant Alexander."

"You mean, cross Alexander. You think I am like a bear."

"Well, if you are not, what are you like?"

"I *am* like a bear. Good-bye, Miss Clarissa Jackson."

"Ah, good-bye."

"Here!" I was already in the door. "If any of your folks go out, ask them to call at the post-office for me. I can't stir. I have done with stirring. *Now* good-bye."

CHAPTER II.

Friday, the 3rd.

Cousin Amy wears white dresses, a black silk apron, and has her hair smooth as if she were a Madonna. Her baby wears the longest, the purest, the most beautiful embroidered frocks; has thin golden hair lying about in little curls. This is Cousin Amy's work, though. She plays with his hair as she holds him and talks. They call him George, for Uncle Hurlbut. I call him all manner of names, and kiss his soft feet until he don't know exactly what to make of it. He looks at me a moment to see if he can know what I mean, being so different from his mamma in my ways, and then goes on taking his dinner. Uncle Hurlbut calls him "little rascal." He bows down to him, though, as they all do. Cousin-in-law Ben Frank, thinks that he—himself, I mean—is greater, and happier than any of the old patriarchs ever were. He is done with hunting, and fishing, and strolling to dream in sly paths. He cannot leave his wife and his boy. He must be there to wait upon his wife and watch his boy.

I suppose one might go a long way, and not find another so happy as my Cousin Amy. I wonder whether I will ever be as happy. I wonder whether I will be married; whether I will ever be the mother of such a beautiful baby; and if I will, whether my husband will love and honor me, as Ben Frank does Cousin Amy.

One thing is sure. I will never, never marry Gustavus Spencer while I live, for I see by his letters to Cousin Davy that he is a miser; that he is not only himself in love with the gold he is heaping; but that, whoever accepts him for her husband, when he comes back, will do it at the miserable risk of being suspected by him of marrying him not for himself alone, but for his wealth alone. I have no patience with stupidity like this; for I did love to know that he thinks of me off there; that he does not allow me to marry without his consent. I loved to think of his coming back to find me improved and worthy to be his friend; of his coming to love me; and of his asking me to love him and be his wife.

This is all over. Here is his last letter to Cousin Davy; I found it in his Latin dictionary. He says—"I shall soon have enough; and then I shall go home. I shall go in August, I have no doubt.

"Davy Hurlbut! I used to think that if the time could ever come when I would have ten thousand dollars of my own, I might then snap my finger at Care in all her bad shapes and be happy all the day, all the year long. But, as true as I live, I'm not one whit, not one whit! happier now than I was four years ago. I have different troubles; but I have as many and as annoying ones. For instance, I am at times eaten up of two great fears. One is, that, when I come home, as I have no own mother, no own family, nobody will be downright glad to see me. *Do* be glad, I beseech you, Davy, and all you at the good house under the elms. Warm up your hearts beforehand, my foster-father, my foster-mother, by thinking of the old days when I was a little tottering thing, dependant on you for shelter and bread. Love me, Davy, for the play upon the same turf, the study upon the same bench. Else, with all my gold, I shall wish myself dead. I have said this same, perhaps, before. I say it again, because you see it is something that concerns me.

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"Here is my other great fear. I am ashamed of this one; for it is poor and egotistical; as mean as dirt, in fact. But I can't help it It is, that, whoever accepts me for her husband, will be thinking, all the time, not of my heart that loves her and longs, oh, so intensely, for her love in exchange; but of the beautiful home and the beautiful dresses I will provide for her. God forbid! for then would my gold be accursed.

"God forbid, moreover, that I dwell upon things to the perversion of my clearness, my justice, so that I shall be in danger of wronging another by unfounded jealousies. I would rather die away here in this strange land, than live for that fate."

This is the way he writes; and I will never marry him; not if he kneels, and begs, and perseveres. I will pity him that he is an orphan with a tender, loving, love-exacting heart. I will be glad to see him as his sister would, if he had one. He shall see that it is the gladness of a sister. He shall understand it thoroughly. He shall not think that I lie in wait for his money. If I see that he warms toward me and will ask me to be something nearer than a sister, I will grow cold and distant toward him and his California gold. He shall see this plainer than day. If he asks me, notwithstanding, I *will not* accept him.

If I could be well married to somebody else before he comes—to cross Alexander for instance. I could be saved oceans of trouble.

But one may as well not sigh and worry. One had better go and see what people are doing. Papa, mamma and Aunt Ruth are in the sitting-room, I know. I hear the comfortable hum of their voices. One always hears the hum of their voices when Aunt Ruth is here, if one comes any where near them. For my parents know a great deal, and Aunt Ruth knows everything. She has books piled up in her chamber, and newspapers and pamphlets lying in every direction. The big books often have dust on them; so has her mantel; so have her chairs and her tables. Aunt Ruth has no time for the dust. There are better things to do, sometimes, she says, than to be going with a dust-cloth in one's hand. She must be reading, or talking, or thinking. All the nations of the earth are astir, she must see what they are about. The Czar peering one way and another, as if he were a huge and hateful bottle-spider—she must see what he is aiming at. The Sultan looking for shifts and securities, as if he were a poor thin fly—kind-hearted, justice-loving Aunt Ruth must know how he fares. She must keep a steady eye on Napoleon's stratagems, on England's counter-stratagems. She stands and looks down upon poor dead Italy, Hungary and Poland, as if she were their mother and they her children. Over the wretchedly poor and vicious of our own land, over all the oppressed every where, she lifts trembling hands and says—"how long, oh, Lord! how long!"

Aunt Ruth has no time to spare for her dress. She puts on a careless little head-dress of black lace, without flowers or riband, because she will not stop to make her hair smooth. She just looks sidewise at white spencers and under-sleeves and collars, and puts them from her. She can never be seeing to them, starching them and making them white. So she puts on under-handkerchief and under-sleeves of black silk lace; and truth to say, they have for her a becoming and suitable look, since her gowns are either black or drab, or deep blue; since she herself is pale as a nun.

I hated when I came into the long hall that separates parlor and sitting-room to listen for the sounds of Alexander's slow, dreamy voice. Aunt Ruth was saying, with strong, but, at the same time, with mild tones—"oh, there are difficulties in the way of doing this. We are apt to speak of 'the rule of duty,' as if it were a thing of silver and rosewood, with joints, to be folded and carried everywhere with us in our pockets; as if, whenever a question of individual or national duty, or rights were started, we have only to draw out our rule and measure the question, its length, breadth and diagonal; measuring no other questions, collateral or remote—remote, as we say, but often having a close relation, after all; as if, after we have done this, we may put our rules into our pockets and tell the individual, or the nation, what he, or it is to do, when he, or it is to do it, and how. We make a great mistake here."

"I know"—I heard papa began, in a tone as if he half admitted the truth of what Aunt Ruth had been saying, still would keep, with polite but firm grace, his old position.

Papa does not look so far and comprehend so much as Aunt Ruth does; and, for this very reason, which should make him the less positive, he is all the stauncher. He believes in things absolute; among the rest, in absolute rules. When he walks the street, or crosses a room, it is his way to go straight forward, "following his nose," as we say. He does an analogous thing in politics and metaphysics.

Aunt Ruth, on the other hand, stops to look at things, both when she walks the streets, and when she is amongst the abstract questions. This helps her wonderfully to comprehensiveness, and, of course, to charity. But, at the same time that she has charity, because she has

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charity, in truth, she mourns over wrong and sin in a deeper, sincerer way than any one I know.

As for dear mamma, she is proud of papa's energy; she loves Aunt Ruth's tenderness and enlarged complacency. She does not know about these things so well, herself; but she likes to sit like a cooing dove between them, agreeing now with him, anon with her, disagreeing with neither. Bless my good, sweet mamma.

This was my loving thought, as I stood leaning against the balustrade to hear them talking.

"Bless my mamma, my papa and my Aunt Ruth!" said I, with a half bow, half courtesy, in the sitting-room door.

They answered me with good smiles. They looked at a large, unoccupied arm-chair, and invited me to go in and sit with them. But I was thinking of Alexander, who was off alone somewhere of course. I would go and find him and see what he was about. That was what I would do. I went softly to the parlor, back to the library where I had been writing and to the office; thinking, first of Gustavus, and with a sick sort of dread. I do not think of him at all without this feeling lately. I am sure I don't see how I can stand in his presence. Then I thought that perhaps Alexander will take a fancy to me, on some ground, and ask me to go with him to his home to be his wife, to keep his rooms in order and see to his medicines; that, in that case, I will say "yes," without hesitation; that we will then be settled, perhaps, in Amesbury by the time Gustavus comes, so that he will have something of a shock in seeing that one, at least, despises his gold as if it were rags, *more* than if it were rags.

I found him, at last, sitting in the outer door of the little vestibule between the parlor and dining-room. It is a very pleasant, shady door at all times of the day; for it opens through a vine-covered trellis out upon the fruit trees. He held a book in his hand; but he did not read. On the contrary, he looked up into the trees to see the birds hopping.

I am sure I blushed a little for the thought I had just been entertaining. But he saw nothing of it. He dropped his eyes and looked on his fingers, when he heard me coming. He looked sour; and yet I believe he assumed the expression. I believe he felt rather sweet; for you see he could not well feel otherwise, with that sweet-scented, western breeze in his face, with the birds and apple-blossoms so near.

Nearer, a little nearer I came. Would he indeed not mind me? not speak to me, or look at me? If he wouldn't, neither would I speak to him. I would not wait long. In one half minute I would go. I would go and sit at Aunt Ruth's feet. I would stay at Aunt Ruth's feet, after that; and, whenever he came near me, I would not see him.

"Good-bye, Mr. Alexander," thought I, moving softly, slowly away. "I'm angry with you. I'm going; and this is the last time I will come near you." I was at the door on the other side of the room.

"Hallo!" said he now, turning quickly round. "Is it you?"

"Yes, it is I, sir," still going.

"Come back."

"I can't."

"Yes! come and see this bird."

"I can't." And I couldn't; for I had tears in my eyes and would not, by any means, let him see them.

"Go along then!" was the gruff reply, as he brought himself round again to the contemplation of his fingers.

He was vexed, I know. I know he is very stiff; and so when we will speak to each other again, is a doubtful question in my mind. I have not seen him since; for I came directly to my room to write. And——

I go down now! One, two, three, four lustrous parasols, and a corresponding number of thin dresses, and trim, light gaiters came through the yard to our door. The Humphreys and——

CHAPTER III.

Evening.

Mrs. Humphreys, Judith Humphreys, Miss Slocum—Judith's "dear Boston friend," as she calls her—and the preceptress have gone. They stayed a long time. Papa grew quite still and thoughtful, waiting for his tea. He is gone often to visit his patients at meal times; this he bears philosophically enough. But when he is on the spot, he gathers a certain stiff and hushed disapprobation of whatever puts itself in the way of his sitting down to his breakfast at eight, to his dinner at two, and his supper at six.

Miss Morse knows his ways. She has tact and delicacy. She made several attempts to bring the rest to their feet; but it is the hard way of all the Humphreys, to move upon their own wills and impulses, not upon those of another. And indeed! Mrs. Humphreys had more to do yet, fanning herself, and telling mamma what a time she has had lately, getting her new brown tissue properly fitted and made. Mrs. Humphreys really *believes* that dressmakers are the greatest trials to one's patience that one *can* have in *this* world. She said so, with a good,

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strong emphasis on her words, especially upon *this*

And Judith—how could Judith go, if Miss Morse did make her gentle entreaties? She was living over again her winter in Boston, turning to me now, and then to see if I heard, and appreciated; but speaking all the time to her friend, Miss Slocum.

"You remembor that first night at the National!" said she.

Miss Slocum dropped her eyelids languidly, and said—"oh, yes! shall I *ever* forget that night? You remember who joined our party between the second and third acts?" I fancy she alluded to some tender young man with beautiful whiskers, moustache and imperial. There seemed to be in some way regretful associations with his memory. In Miss Slocum's mind, that is. Judith was animated by it. "Oh, indeed! I guess I *do* remember! I remember how somebody," with the cunningest look at Miss Slocum, "how *somebody* trembled and grew pale, when we met him afterward out on the Cambridge road. *I* remember!"

Again Miss Slocum dropped her eyelids, with a half smile and a fluttering sigh. Papa walked the floor. A patient came to the office to see him just then. This was a relief to mamma and me. *Now* they might stay and talk until bed time, if they chose, and if papa's patient would keep him so long. Only Catharine waited now, and the table in the dining-room, and the tall coffee and tea urns on the kitchen stove. Or, perhaps poor, sick Alexander waited somewhere; in some outer door, or on some seat out under the fruit trees.

Aunt Ruth sat composed and still. She admits, in a logical way, that there are persons in the world who must be weak and vain, in the very shape and putting together of their brains; and that, with regard to all such unfortunate persons, it is our part to bear with them quietly, philosophically, and like meek, reasonable Christians; never sneering, never ridiculing; but with a sincere desire to make them a little more sensible, a little happier and nobler, if we can; and that, at the same time, it is their part to put the flutter off from their manners, to keep their tongues still and to lift their hearts, with this prayer of Agar in them, "remove far from me vanity and lies."

Aunt Ruth, therefore, listened to them, and made the most of it, if they said anything really worth saying. She turned to me, at last, and with a concerned look, said—"where is Alexander? do you know, Clarissa? he ought not to be out now. The sun is down; the dew is falling."

I would go and see, I said. And, upon this, Judith began to flutter and arrange herself. She hoped that if I found him, I would bring him in.

I looked in all the outer doors and all the garden seats; in the library, in the office—where was papa with his fingers on his patient's pulse—and then I listened at a landing on the stairs to hear him moving, if he were in his chamber. He was there. I heard him signing, in the lowest possible tones—

"And the dew lies bright on the vale's repose."

"Bless him! he is a nice boy!" thought I; and I went back to tell Aunt Ruth in a whisper, what I had heard.

"Poor fellow!" said she, with a moisture gathering in her eyes.

Just then—but I shall tell my story in the morning. In the morning! when

"The sun's gay beam on the hill-top glows;"

when indeed,

"The dew lies bright on the vale's repose."

Good night, best, stiffest Alexander. I will say my good night here, since I was too stiff, since you were too stiff to have it said between us below. Good night—good night.

The 4th.

Just then, as I began to say last evening, sweet Mary Morgan came tripping in, holding her bonnet-strings, and with half of her light shawl dragging on the carpet. She was livelier than a wren. The next moment came Singleton. Were we not revivified then, as if a strengthening breeze had come in? I wished that Alexander would come down; this was in the way of my perfect contentment. I pitied him for his staying away there alone, for his being so sick and so fractious. So did Aunt Ruth, I think; for she had a serious mouth, serious eyes. But she carried on a strong chat with Singleton, who is one of her favorites.

Papa came. Alas, for papa's tea! Mamma and Aunt Ruth looked concerned for him. Uncle Hurlbut rode up to the gate, with a tramp of his horse's feet, as if it were the Thunderer, Jupiter, coming, instead of Uncle Hurlbut. He came in; and while he was talking with papa about some lumber he was going down to the mills to get, his hired boy, Zeke, halted on the lawn outside the yard, with Uncle Hurlbut's team; that is, with Uncle Hurlbut's cart and his huge oxen, Bright and Star. I knew Star by the white spot in his forehead, and Bright by the peculiar arch of his horns, as if he himself were an arch rogue.

Mary Morgan and I went to the door to look

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at them; I to tell and she to hear how I met Bright in a lane once; how he stopped still for a minute, right before me, then made me a profound bow, and went chassering sidewise to leave abundant room for me to pass. Bright and Star, meantime, stood there chewing their cuds and looking straight before them, with an air as if they were two philosophers. We laughed at them. We went close to them, and stroked first their shining sides; whereupon they brought their heads round to look at us—and then we stroked their noses. Mary had fears at first. I had none; for Amy and I had, more than once, let them eat corn out of our hands. Soon, I hardly know how, or upon what impulse, Mary and I were in the cart; Zeke stood near us grinning and delivering up his goad to Mary, as she demanded.

"I'm scared half to death!" said she; and she had looks of real terror mingled with her laughter.

I have no doubt that that would have been the end of it; that we would have been on the ground again in half a minute, if they had all stayed within. But, first Alexander saw us from his seat by his window. He frowned and said—"you're crazy, girls."

This brought papa and Uncle Hurlbut out into the yard, and the rest into the windows and door. They were shocked, still they laughed; *how* they laughed! Singleton was near rolling in the grass. Ah! I shall always be sorry that Hogarth was not there to see them as they watched us, as they saw Mary wield the goad, and heard what unprecedented things she was saying to Bright and Star. He should have seen Bright and Star too; for they had a puzzled look; they made uncertain movements, a little forward, a little backward. Ah! they could never, never know what to do, or which foot to put forward, if one talked to them and gave orders like that! as Mary did. It was positively no better than this—"Bright and Star, hish—gee off—whoa hish—gee."

Yes; they understood that last word. It was spoken that time, as if it meant something. They started then with vigor. And when the women all cried out with terror, and papa and Uncle Hurlbut and Singleton came rushing, Singleton going over the paling as if he were a leaf blown by the wind, when Alexander too came with his cane upraised in his bony hand, then Bright, the fiery red Bright, who is lively and graceful as a colt, whenever he is let out of the yoke, who goes prancing always when he is on his way to the spring for drink, opened his eyes and nostrils wide, braced his limbs for the accelerated movement he thought it best to adopt, under the circumstances, flung his tail out on the breeze of the evening and went trotting; and Star, in corresponding measures, with him; for Star's habit is to do whatever he sees Bright doing. Luckily they thought it best to take us out of the village, up toward Uncle Hurlbut's.

Mary and I were "carried away," in more than one sense of the phrase. It was so novel! so crazy! The evening was so blue—save where the crimson clouds were piled in the west—so still and balmy!

"Ah, how I like it!" said Mary, with the brightest eyes one ever saw. And then she flourished her goad, saying, with her delicate voice, something about "gee, Bright" and "hish, Star."

Singleton stopped short in the road to laugh again. He was not far from us; for, since the first half minute, Bright and Star had been done with running, altogether, so that it was easy overtaking us.

We were at the pretty bend in the road, where Mrs. Cormick's cabbages and burdocks grow together, just over the dilapidated stile; and where her little brown house hides, in the summer-time, behind tall artichokes, sunflowers and scarlet runners. Mrs. Cormick came out, as she always does when we appear; for she does our washing and house-cleaning, and is often here. She likes us all, and we all like her. She spread her tall, wide frame in the narrow doorway, flinging one of her large, bare arms across her forehead, as she is accustomed to do, whether the sun shines, or does not shine. Bright and Star, gallant ones that they are, stopped at sight of her.

"Goodness!" said she, "where on *airth* did ye git that cart and oxen? any way? Oh! they're yer Uncle Hurlbut's, ain't they, Clar'sa?"

"Yes, Mrs. Cormick. Wasn't he good to let us have 'em?"

"Good to let us have 'em?" mimicked Singleton, panting and laughing. "You are two witches. Are they not, Mrs. Cormick?" He stood by the cart wiping the perspiration.

"I sh'd think so, Mr. Singleton." She was on a break-neck sort of passage through the rank grass to us. Her "boys" have betaken themselves afar, poor woman! to the West and California; so that the old paths their busy, young feet made, are all closing with the thick grass. We inquired about her rheumatism.

"Why, I'm pooty well now, as ter that; but my head troubles me," lifting her hand and giving her head a rubbing. "Aint ye gwine ter git out an' come in? I sh'd like ter have ye."

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"Can't stop now, Mrs. Cormick. Come down and see us to-morrow."

"I sh'd like to; for, some how I'm kind o' lonesome here almost all the time lately."

"I am sorry for you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye. Good-bye, Mary, and Mr. Singleton. But," with a laugh, "I sh'd like to know what possessed the girls to come up and see me in a cart, shouldn't you, Mr. Singleton?"

"I am sure I should. Good evening, Mrs. Cormick. Take your oxen, Zeke," for Zeke was close by, "I shall have enough to do with these girls."

But I must go below. It is almost breakfast time, I know."

I hear Alexander humming softly in his chamber. This is a new thing for him, singing. He has been much too sick and impatient for this, until within a few days. Perhaps he finds pleasure in being here. Perhaps papa's medicine already does him good. He stood with the rest waiting for us, when we came back last evening. The rest were waiting for us, that is. He was not; he was talking with Aunt Ruth. He turned and came into the house as soon as we came up.

"Oh," said they all. "We were careless things!" But they liked it as well as we did. All but the Humphreys and Miss Slocum. The Humphreys said not a word; but they looked up on us through their eyebrows. Miss Slocum, with half-shut eyes, said—"is this the way you do, out here in the country? is it, dear Judith?"

"Oh, my! no!" answered Judith.

(TO BE CONCLUDED.)

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THE LAST OF HIS LINE.
BY E. J. BOWEN.
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THE LAST OF HIS LINE.

BY E. J. BOWEN.

"FACT," it has been said, "is stranger than fiction." The following story, derived from authentic documents, forcibly illustrates the assertion.

One stormy night, in 1616, an Italian vessel was wrecked on the coast of Suffolk, England, from which only one person came ashore alive. He was a young man of noble appearance, who spoke English with a foreign accent, and having been carried to the house of Mr. Petre, the rector of the parish, there grew up between him and the good pastor, before his recovery, such a friendship, that his host would not hear of his leaving.

The young stranger had given himself the simple name of Theodore, and seemed averse to further inquiry into his name or affairs, but he was so gentle in manners, so intelligent, and so accomplished, that he became as a beloved son to the good pastor. "I was a lonely man," said the rector to him repeatedly, "but heaven has given me a son in pity. You will not part from me, Theodore? I have enough for both."

The young stranger replied with warmth to Mr. Petre's kindness, but repeatedly mentioned, that he required no pecuniary support—that he would receive means enough to render him independent of all such aid, on corresponding with his friends in Italy.

Mr. Petre introduced his new friend to all whom he himself knew, and among others to the family of Mr. Balls, one of the principal proprietors of the neighborhood. This gentleman was of an ancient local house, and proud of his descent from a follower of the Saxon Harold at the battle of Hastings. He had a large family, the eldest of whom was his daughter, Mary, a young lady possessed of great personal attractions, and a heart gentle and susceptible. The stranger, so noble in appearance and elegant in manners, made ere long a deep impression on her affections, which was fully reciprocated by the object of her regard. But he was modest and unassuming, and so well knew the difficulties which his position as an unknown castaway involved him in, that, but for an accidental peril which the young lady sustained in his presence, from the unmanageableness of her riding palfrey, the secret might have remained forever locked up in the recess of his own heart. The danger of the mistress of his affections, however, called forth a passionate outburst of love. It was heard, and responded to, ere the parties concerned could think of aught else.

The lovers met, and met again. "This must not be," said Theodore, at length, on one of these occasions; "your father, dearest Mary, must be told all. And yet I fear——"

"Fear!" replied the young lady, "what have we to fear?—you *must* be our equal in birth," and she glanced with a look of pride on her lover's manly and dignified form.

"Birth! equal in birth!" cried he, and for the first time Mary beheld something like pride, or even haughtiness, on his countenance. But it soon passed away, and he said: "I *am* the equal of your father in birth, but circumstances exist which compel me to be so far silent on that point. I have sworn an oath, that to none but the wife of my bosom will I reveal *my name and origin.*" Mary became thoughtful at these words, and her lover saw a blush gather slowly on her downcast cheeks. He read its signification as clearly as if it had been told in words. "No, Mary," cried he, "the honor of my mother was an untainted as thine own—as pure as the heaven that overlooks us! But mine has been a strange doom. The welfare of others called from me the oath I have spoken of, and it must be kept. I shall satisfy your father—for ere long I shall have the means—that I am of good and honorable birth, and of means, perhaps, equal to his own; but my name and family, I have said, must be made known to thee alone—if, indeed, I ever have the happiness to call thee mine."

Theodore did not address himself to Mr. Balls until he had communicated with his friends in Italy, and received such credentials as he trusted would remove any objections that the father of Mary might entertain. Lovers look through a magnifying-glass at all the circumstances favorable to their wish, but apply a diminishing one to all obstacles and difficulties in their way. So it was in the present case. When Mr. Balls was applied to by Theodore, he started at the proposal. "My daughter, sir!" cried he; "my daughter is of an ancient and honorable family. The Balls family possessed this house and property, where we now are, before the conquest of England by the Normans. You must certainly

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be conscious, sir, of possessing an honorable pedigree to think of such a proposal as this."

Theodore's heart sank within him as Mr. Balls spoke. "I am conscious," he replied, "of an honorable descent, and I do not come thus before you without the means of proving it, although I must avouch candidly and at once, that there are some things connected with myself which I cannot disclose. I will satisfy you, by the testimonials of those whose word ought not to be doubted, that my name is an honorable one, but that name it is not in my power to reveal." Mr. Balls gazed at the speaker with a look of surprise. "I might have taken a fictitious name, and have deceived you, but I prefer to admit, that there are imperative reasons for withholding my name from all but one person."

"And who may that person be?" said Mr. Balls, with an ominous sneer. Theodore observed the look, and did not immediately reply. "Surely the person to whom you allude," continued Mr. Balls, "must be the head of that house with which you seek to connect yourself?"

The young stranger answered: "No, sir; I am bound by a solemn engagement to reveal my name only to her who becomes the sharer of it with me."

"That is to say, that my daughter is to wed with one who dare not disclose his name to the world? Can the cause of this be a creditable one? Impossible!"

Theodore's heart was too deeply interested in the matter to permit him to take offence at the words of Mr. Balls, especially as his reason told him they were founded on a natural feeling. He therefore pressed the father of Mary to look at the letters from Italy, to which he had referred. The other consented, as much from curiosity as from any other motive. The letters were from two Italian noblemen, and were written evidently according to a form dictated by Theodore. The writers stated that they knew the family of Theodore to be of high distinction, and his birth to be honorable, though there were important reasons for concealing his name and family from the world at large. They also referred to his possession of considerable property, and mentioned other circumstances of a favorable nature.

We do not wish to lengthen our story. Mr. Balls declared that if the register of baptism of the young stranger were presented to him along with these documents, and he were permitted to show the whole to his family and friends, he would be satisfied. This decision he adhered to, and neither the entreaties of Theodore, nor the tears of his daughter, could move him to alter it. On the other hand, Theodore firmly though sadly declared, that such a proposal could never be acceded to by him.

The consequence was, that the young stranger's visits to the house of his mistress were peremptorily forbidden, although Mr. Petre, whose confidence in his guest's honor and integrity was unshaken, joined his entreaties to those of the lovers to bring matters to a favorable close. But all was in vain. Can we wonder at the issue? Theodore and the object of his love met in secret, and, finally, they were privately married. The direct reason of this rash step was the confident hope entertained by Mary, that, if entrusted with the secret of Theodore, she might, by the strength of her testimony, reconcile her father to their union. She *did* learn her husband's secret, and such was its nature, in her eyes at least, that it only augmented her love, and increased her pride in him a thousandfold. But this did not save her from the violent anger of her father when her marriage was disclosed.

"Oh, believe me, dear father," she exclaimed, with tears, "he is one of whom you ought in every respect to feel proud!"

"Proud!" cried the irritated father, "proud of a nameless wanderer!—my family proud of a union with such as he!"

"Yes," returned the daughter, "you will one day be proud of Theodore, and repent of your unkindness."

"If you desire me to do so, unfold at once this vile mystery! If not, begone from these walls, and follow the vagrant you have chosen!"

In the little village of Llandulph, in Cornwall, the pair who form the main personages of our story lived for many years after their union, beloved by all around them. They were happy in their mutual affection, though the continued anger of the lady's father threw a frequent damp over the enjoyments of the wife, who made many fruitless appeals for a reconciliation. At length Mary wrote that her husband was ill, and, to increase the evil, had been made so chiefly by the cessation of his wonted communications from Italy. She and her family were now in want. Mr. Balls turned a deaf ear to this new appeal from his daughter. To a second of the same nature he proved equally cold. A third communication, after a considerable interval of time, informed him that his daughter was a broken-hearted widow, her husband having sunk under the pressure of want and its attendant distresses. A portion of the same letter led Mr. Balls to go to Cornwall.

The following inscription, engraven on a brass tablet affixed to a mural monument in the chancel of Llandulph church, and still to be seen there

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by visitors, will show what Mr. Balls learned on his arrival there:—

"Here lieth the body of Theodoro Paleologus, of Pesanio, in Italy, descended from the Imperial line of the last Christian Emperors of Greece, being the son of Camilio, the son of Prosper, the son of Theodoro, the son of John, the son of Thomas, the second brother to Constantine Paleologus, the eighth of that name and last of the line that reigned in Constantinople until subdued by the Turks, who married with Mary, the daughter of William Balls, of Hadleigh, in Suffolk, gent.; * * * * and departed this life at Clyfton, the 21st of January, 1636."

Persecuted by Pope Paul V., and his successor Gregory XV., who hated the Greek line, Theodoro Paleologus would have perished in Italy, had not the interference of a powerful friend procured permission for him to retire to England, upon condition of his taking an oath never to divulge his name, that those attached to the imperial house might remain ignorant of the existence of its representative.

"Father," said the widow of the last Paleologus, "I said you would one day repent."

The English squire, whose ancestor had been at the battle of Hastings, did indeed think with sorrowful regret of his conduct to the last of the Cæsars of the East!

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THE PEARL OF CORDOVA.
BY EDWARD J. HANDILVE.
Peterson's Magazine (1849-1892); Oct 1853; VOL. XXIV., No. 4.; American Periodicals
pg. 185

THE PEARL OF CORDOVA.

BY EDWARD J. HANDILVE.

It was a night of stars and mystery; a night when the breeze which sweeps across the Guadelquiver is redolent with the perfume of flowers, and bears, in ecstacy, as it were, the melody of harp, and cymbal, and lute—gentle and soul-inspiring strains; while, remote in its wierd and conscious beauty, Cordova rises proudly, and with an awful and massive calmness of aspect, beneath the silver and shimmering sheen of the full moon.

And that aromatic breeze wantoned with the dark tresses of Amine—the Pearl of Cordova, as she was called, while reclining in the strictly guarded sanctity of the harem. She was beautiful—very beautiful! of that rare perfection of style which mocks to scorn the efforts of poet or artist to describe. A skin of purest alabaster, seemingly just breathed on by the rose; eyes whose liquid depths seemed to contain an eternity of passionate earnestness; a form such as Venus, in her maidenhood, might have envied: these were a few of the charms of which the fair captive could boast—charms that were doomed to entail upon their possessor nought but misery and death.

She was alone, and while gazing forth through the open casement upon the scene of peaceful beauty that lay extended before her, she could not refrain from sighing at her sad destiny. And it was, indeed, a cruel fate for her, young, rich as she was in all the grace and virtue that made life dear! Torn from the home of her childhood by ruthless men, who looked upon the purity of her manners and person but as marketable properties; then exposed to all the horrors of a slave-market, to be desecrated by the gaze of a rude populace, and finally disposed of to the highest bidder—who chanced to be the conspirator, Samail—that she might, for the time, become a slave to his passion, and then be cast off to linger out the remainder of her life in comfortless obscurity. Truly, it was a dark and bitter future, to which that fair being looked forward!

"Ah, home of my infancy!" she murmured, in a voice like the music of a harp, when played on by the trembling wind; "never again shall I behold thy dear loved scenes; never again shall I behold my afflicted parents. And Oton, too, he on whom I lavished all the love of which my young heart was capable, that I must relinquish all hopes of again meeting him? Oh, wretched Amine! can you forget that he whom you are compelled to obey, may even now be seeking you? Seeking you that his hated presence may plunge you still further in despair. Sweet memories of the past! deeply are ye graven on my heart—that heart which drank in so often the sweet converse that fell from my Oton's lips, and which now is stricken to the core by the loss of all on earth it worshipped!"

"Then why does Amine bear the chains of bondage?" said a voice; "why does she, whose beauty, in its chasteness, rivals the orb of night—whose voice is sweeter than the Peri's song; whose form is more lovely than the Houri's in Paradise, consent to become the hideous Samail's victim?"

Surprised and startled, Amine turned as she heard these words, and beheld, standing a few paces from her, a youth of noble and commanding aspect.

"Oton!" the maiden murmured.

"Amine!" replied the youth; and the next moment he clasped her fondly in his arms.

For some time the lovers, for lovers they truly were, could not speak, with emotion. But when at length Amine awoke to a full consciousness of her lover's dangerous position, she started wildly from his arms, and urged him to seek safety in immediate flight.

"Not so!" answered Oton, proudly; "unless, indeed, you will it, and I can scarcely believe that a few days could have so much changed you."

"You know you speak unkindly, Oton," returned Amine, with emotion. "For it is impossible that you can doubt the strength and constancy of my love. It is that I fear the approach of him whose slave I am, and who would wreak a terrible vengeance on you for this daring intrusion. I speak of the cruel Samail——"

"May heaven's lightnings blast him!" cried the youth, bitterly.

"Ah, pray not so wildly, Oton," said the maiden: "I shudder while I listen to your voice."

"Nay, Amine," he answered, "you know not the great cause I have for cursing the arch

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apostate—apostate alike to the religion of his fathers, as to every good feeling of the human heart. He it was who, with his own hand, deprived both my parents of life, and sent me forth an orphan, without any inheritance, save the recollection of my dead father's wrongs. He it was who hunted myself and brave companions, like wild beasts, through the jungles and rocks of the wild mountain passes. He, the base born serf, seeking to destroy the prince, whose father fostered him."

"Oh, Oton, you excite yourself beyond your bearing, and in so doing, forget the reality of our position. You spoke, a moment since, as though you were a prince!"

"And I spoke truly!" was the reply that startled her. "Hitherto you have only known me as the humble Oton; now learn that he who speaks of the renegade with such detestation, is Ilmynos, the descendant of a line of kings!"

"Indeed!" said a voice, that sounded like the cry of the hyena, when about to spring upon its prey. "Indeed!"

"It is the voice of Samail," cried Amine, with a stifled shriek: "save yourself, Oton, for his vengeance will be terrible."

"You speak truly, girl," said the same hideous voice, and the next moment Samail, accompanied by a dozen armed men, entered the apartment.

"Seize yon infidel!" he said, in a voice of smothered rage. "Bear him away, and let the bow-string do its silent work!" Then turning to Amine, he continued, "your time has not yet come, for I would have you live to minister to my love!"

Ilmynos resisted his assailants with all his power, but numbers prevailed, and in the end he was overpowered and dragged bleeding from the spot.

"Now, then, you are mine!" cried Samail, exultingly, advancing toward Amine, whom he had left for a moment leaning against a pedestal, in order to see his vengeance on her lover consummated—"mine, without the hope of redemption!"

He took her hand in his; it was icy cold, and she did not seek to repel him. He pressed his unholy lips upon her brow; it was chill and clammy. A sudden and nameless horror seized upon him: he listened to hear her breath—but respiration had ceased forever. The Pearl of Cordova was no more: for her heart was broken!

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ELM-GROVE.
BY MISS ALICE GRAY.
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pg. 187

ELM-GROVE.

BY MISS ALICE GRAY.

One might have traversed the Hudson daily from busy, crowded New York to the staid Dutch city of Albany, without ever suspecting the romantic beauty and luxuriant view gathered around the deserted country-seat of Elm-Grove. Many are the lovely spots which although commanding a view of the glorious river, cannot be seen from its banks—moss-covered dells—willow-shaded brooks—scenes of bloom and promise, or of neglect and sad decay. Elm-Grove was in Goshen county—a bad place for romance, for the word Goshen reminds one of butter, and what can be more unsentimental than *butter?* Still Elm-Grove was most poetically beautiful. The house had been shut up for many years, the grass was high in the garden-walk, the shrubbery was overgrown, upon the pillars and even the steps of the portico many swift-springing creepers had clambered, mingled with thick rose vines, whose blossoms crowning the old house which stood a victim to desolation, seemed like the garlands bound around the brows of the ancient offerings for sacrifice. In various parts of the extensive grounds, the old elms had bent down over many a little hollow as if to screen it from injury, forming sweet, dreamy nooks. Through an opening in the trees directly in front of the house, you caught a glimpse of the sparkling Hudson—that alone unchanged. In the minds of the few who wandered through this wilderness of beauty, no emotion was more frequent than wonder that such a fairy spot could be so deserted. Did I say *they* questioned thus? No, it needed not, for in their very sight had pride completed this work of ruin.

Elm-Grove had been in its prime—its lovely prime—more than fifteen years before. It was then the abode of a widow lady, Mrs. Ogilvie. Light footsteps and young voices sounded among the scented blossoms and echoed through the house. Three of Mrs. Ogilvie's five children were sons—Arthur, Herbert, and James; and wild, daring youths they were. Ellen, their eldest sister, joined in many of their amusements, but Agnes was too quiet. These sports, however, were never pursued in presence of their mother, for Mrs. Ogilvie was emphatically a lady of the old school, and entertained the most antiquated ideas about respect to parents. She was an English woman by birth, and had brought from the mother country these *un*-American principles, which she carried even to excess. Her children were always kept at a respectful distance. They would no more have dreamed of entering her room unsummoned, or of talking freely before her, than of flying to the moon. Her manners toward every one were of the most stately kind, and her habits the most formal. It is told of Sir Walter Scott's mother that when sitting upon a chair she never touched its back. I do not think that to the day of her death, Mrs. Ogilvie was ever seen to avail herself in company of that resource of loungers. Always stately and reserved, she inspired almost every one with awe. There are some people whose general manner is proud, but now and then some little thing will escape that chases away all fear. Miss Mitford in her beautiful paper on homes, has recorded how her embarrassment in presence of a certain very dignified lady was dispelled at once, by hearing her call her sister by some pretty diminutive, instead of her regular name of Anna Maria. But Mrs. Ogilvie never used nick-names—never. She always maintained a clear, dignified demeanor toward her children. Not that she was destitute of feeling. On the contrary, one would strongly suspect her of having a heart. Her love for her children was in reality great, though not at all demonstrative. Like all reserved people, the affection she inspired was deep—her smiles were more valued because rare. Pride was her ruling trait—though as many other people do she called it "only a true appreciation of her own position."

The buds of April were opening to the music of the first singing birds, when Herbert Ogilvie one bright morning strolled down to the steamboat landing to see the arrivals. In half an hour afterward he knocked gently at the door of his mother's room. People always knocked gently at Mrs. Ogilvie's door.

"Mother," he said, when she opened it, "I've met a college friend down at the landing with his father. They've come up to look at the old Norton Place that's for sale. Have you any objections to my asking them here to dinner to-day?"

"Certainly not, my son. I will always make welcome any friend of yours."

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So Herbert, when he met his friend in the course of the morning, manufactured a speech for his stately mother, mingling to perfection, he thought, her formality and hospitality. Could people only know the numberless complimentary messages put into their mouths by obliging relatives!

"Did you tell Mr. Richards and his son that we dined precisely at four?" said Mrs. Ogilvie to Herbert, as the hands of the clock approached within five minutes of that hour.

"I did, ma'am," answered Herbert, inwardly hoping that they might come soon, as the warmth of his mother's welcome would, he knew, be diminished in the inverse ratio of the time she had waited.

Just on the stroke of four, Messrs. Richards, senior and junior, were ushered into the apartment. The first thing the man of business did after making his *congee* to Mrs. Ogilvie, was to pull out his watch and compare it with the clock.

"Just in time, you see, madam," he said. "I'm a punctual man."

The lady smiled graciously at this coincidence of tastes, and taking his arm, led the way to the dining-room.

Mr. Richards entertained his hostess during dinner with an account of his plans respecting the old Norton Place, which he intended to purchase and modernize, till she might have said with Byron, "Something too much of this." As for his son Charles, he was devoted to music, and of course good for little else. There were no Reodis, and Yedeseos, and Steffanonis in those days, but he was as little at a loss for subjects to energize about as the perfumed youths who now adjust their lorgnettes at the Opera House.

The carnations were hiding their glowing cheeks from the flatteries of the numerous lamps suspended from the old trees of Elm-Grove—lively strains of music were ringing through the grounds—Mrs. Ogilvie had a *fete champetre* on a brilliant mid-summer night. Her lovely daughter, Agnes, was the star of the festival. Ellen did not possess her sister's sculpture-like beauty. I know heroines *must* have a beautiful, or at least an interesting face. It would be almost impossible to excite interest for a plain or an ugly one. But I am not obliged to try that task for Ellen Ogilvie, for her appearance was truly interesting. None ever gazed upon that delicate face but turned to gaze again.

Among the guests was the new-comer, Mr. Richards, with his family, consisting of his wife, the musical youth before-mentioned, and one fair daughter. By Fanny Richards' side in the garden-walk, or on the brilliant lawn, by the tinkling fountain, or in the elegant supper-room, was Arthur Ogilvie. His mother's piercing eye took in all, and she did not quite approve of this exclusive devotion. So she turned to her John Tucker, a young gentleman who had once tried to be very attentive to the beautiful Agnes, but reading little encouragement in her calm, dark eyes, and bethinking himself of Mrs. Ogilvie's known fastidiousness about her daughters intimate acquaintances, had voted, with an indolent puff of his cigar, that "it wouldn't *pay*." Mr. John Tucker was, however, always at Mrs. Ogilvie's disposal, and she now addressed him with, "Mr. Tucker, would you not like an introduction to our new neighbor, Miss Richards?"

Mr. Tucker would be too happy, and so the introduction was performed, and Arthur separated from his companion. But he, in common with the rest of Mrs. Ogilvie's children, had not lived so long under her unbending rule, without learning the lesson always taught by excessive strictness—the art of manœuvring. Soon then, he was again dancing with Fanny Richards, though he avoided meeting the eye of his stately mother.

The next morning Ellen and Agnes spent more than two hours in "talking over" the *fete* with their brothers.

"Upon my word, Ellen," cried Arthur, "Fanny Richards is the most agreeable girl I ever saw in my life."

"Why, Arthur, I didn't know you were so deeply in love," exclaimed Ellen, laughing.

"You believe in love at first sight, don't you, Arthur?" inquired Herbert, quizzically, tapping his boot with a switch. All poets do, I believe."

"Did I say I was in love with her?"

"No use in saying it, my dear fellow, its sufficiently evident. Give me your pen-knife, will you?"

"What do you want of it?"

"To keep it, to be sure. I'm not going to have you spoil the back of all the trees in the grounds, cutting Fanny Richards' name on them."

"Pshaw! don't be a simpleton."

"Pretty advice from you! Why there's the corner of a sonnet to the fair Fanny peeping out of your pocket now. You'd better burn that long poem you've begun for commencement, and compose an ode upon the charms of your *inomorata*."

"Well! you may laugh as much as you will. Fanny Richards is certainly very handsome. Come, Agnes, I'll leave it to you. They say one pretty girl never sees the beauty of another, but do you redeem the character of your sex. Isn't she very charming?"

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"She most certainly is, Arthur."

"Well," said Herbert, yawning, "I only hope the mania isn't catching. You haven't fallen in love with her, Brother Charley, have you, Agnes, or you, Ellen? I declare I'm in favor of female representation in the case of that family."

"She's a fine girl, a very fine girl," said Arthur, energetically, and he was going on in a most enthusiastic strain, when he heard his mother's step.

"We should be wiser if we knew what our coming hides and silences, but should we walk as undisturbed on our way?" says Willis. Mrs. Ogilvie was peculiarly one of those persons who thus lose much knowledge, and are spared much pain. Arthur's declarations ceased as she approached, and Herbert rose from his indolent position and offered her his seat. She would not take it, however, and soon walked away. Arthur went to call upon Fanny Richards, and Herbert, whistling to his dog, strolled down the avenue.

"Arthur's really in love, isn't he, Agnes?" said Ellen, when they were alone.

"He has all the symptoms, certainly," replied Agnes; and Ellen, laying down her work, dreamily watched the swaying trees, and mused about her twin-brother. A poet by nature, with all a poet's sensitiveness and enthusiasm, was Arthur. He had a most affectionate heart and gentle temper, and was the darling of his sisters, particularly of Ellen, who was his exact counterpart.

A beautiful girl on horseback! what more captivating object? Both Agnes and Ellen Ogilvie were most graceful equestrians, and one lovely afternoon went out to ride with their brothers and Fanny Richards. Charley Richards too accompanied them, humming the last new air.

Fanny was a gay little brunette, and in high spirits that afternoon. "Will you try a race, Mr. Ogilvie," she cried, describing circles in the air with her little whip, "to the foot of that hill?"

Arthur was off in an instant, and Herbert laid his whip on the shoulder of Agnes' beautiful Arabian, and followed, shouting, "come on, Charley! You and Ellen try."

If Mrs. Ogilvie could have seen her daughters racing on the high road! As we never wish any thing kept from the knowledge of any one person without some one carrying it directly to them, so an old gentleman and his wife whom the flying riders passed, must needs stop at Elm-Grove on their way home, and report proceedings. Great mischief-makers these old people!

Herbert was the only one of Mrs. Ogilvie's children who ever ventured to take off the edge of a reproof by a witticism, and well-timed for his sisters was his smart speech on their return that night, for Mrs. Ogilvie's dark eyes were bent on them with severity. After some time she asked who had proposed this exhibition. Herbert looked at Arthur, and Arthur looked at his sisters. Agnes calmly answered, "Fanny Richards, mamma."

"I thought so. I never did like that girl."

Strong in the breast of even the most gentle of the sons of Adam is the spirit of opposition. Every word or look of coldness that escaped Mrs. Ogilvie toward Fanny, only impelled Arthur the more strongly toward her. The months crept on. It was in November that he asked his mother one morning if she would grant him a few moment's conversation. She bowed her head and led the way to her own room. And then hurriedly and impetuously he declared his love for Fanny Richards, and entreated his mother's consent to their union. Mrs. Ogilvie set with her dark eyes fixed calmly on the floor till he had finished the last word, and then lifted her stately head and replied. Very harsh and chilling fell her words upon her son's heart, and most passionate were his pleadings against her decision. Mrs. Ogilvie shook her head and waved her hand, but Arthur would not be silenced. Then the black eyes flashed, and she spoke in imperious tones.

"Let me hear no more of this. It can never be—I will never consent. I thought you had more pride, Arthur."

"Had I as much as yourself, my dear mother, I would not have to bend a fraction of it in marrying Fanny Richards."

"What do I hear! Mr. Richards' family are very well for acquaintances, friends if you will, but an alliance with them—another thing altogether. Remember the family you are descended from, Arthur."

"Mother, it is idle to talk of family. My happiness for life is involved in this."

"I will listen to no love-sick nonsense."

"Nor will I give utterance to any. The deepest and most sacred feelings of my heart, if you recognize such things as feelings, are concerned here."

"Arthur, you are disrespectful. But it is a fit reward for parleying with my own child. I have done. You know my decision. My consent you shall never have, and if you persevere, I cast you off forever. You shall be no longer a son of mine. Now go," and she pointed to the door.

Arthur stood still.

"Either you or I must go out of that door, Arthur. Will you force *me* to leave the room?"

Arthur went, and his proud mother was left to her own reflections.

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She had listened to her son's first words without any appearance of surprise, but in truth she had never been more astounded. She had regarded his partiality for Fanny Richards as only an idle flirtation, never allowing herself to think that a child of her's could condescend further. Connected with the most noble families of England, and descended from a long line of noble ancestors, there were very few in America whom she looked upon as suitable alliances for her children. She could never dream of allowing her oldest son to connect himself with the daughter of a retired merchant.

Would Arthur disobey? The symptoms of rebellion had been strong. Mrs. Ogilvie rose and walked her room for a full hour, and then sat down to her desk and addressed a letter to Miss Fanny Richards. A letter couched in the most polished terms—Mrs. Ogilvie was never rude—but conveying the most cutting and haughty sentiments that pen ever traced—proudly and sternly warning her in conclusion, not to attempt to force herself into a family where her coming was so deprecated.

Meantime Arthur was struggling with his own heart. Educated as he had been in habits of implicit obedience to his mother, he shrunk from disobeying her positive commands. Yet to give up his heart's dearest affection—he felt that the freshness and glory of his manhood would be gone forever. He was wholly dependant upon his mother. "I can never ask Fanny to share a beggar's lot," he groaned. "But I might work to win her. I would gladly toil night and day. Some of the products of this poor brain might bring me money," and the young poet fell into a reverie of sleepless nights, rewarded by days of success, and at last gaining him his bride.

He spent the night in pacing his chamber, and early in the morning sought the abode of his beloved. She would not see him. She had been taken suddenly ill the day before on the receipt of a letter from Elm-Grove. But Arthur would not be denied, and sent message after message till she at last entered the room wrapped in a shawl. Arthur started back as he marked the change of a few hours. An only and petted daughter, with warm feelings and passionate temper, she had been touched to the quick by Mrs. Ogilvie's letter.

"I had resolved never to see you again, Arthur," she said.

"Oh, Fanny, how can you speak so calmly?"

"Calmly, Arthur, I am afraid it will kill me. But oh! I expected nothing of this. I knew not that your mother's prejudices were so strong."

Arthur shook his head mournfully. "There may be hope yet," he murmured, after a pause.

"Are you mocking me, Arthur? You must know there is none. Wounded, insulted as I have been, do you think I would accept your hand now?"

"Will you let me see my mother's letter, Fanny?"

Fanny handed it to him with a trembling hand. He read it, and then covering his face with his hands, he groaned in despair.

A half hour passed, and then Fanny rose. "Farewell, Arthur!" she said, in broken accents.

Arthur caught her hand, "oh, Fanny, I cannot, I will not part from you!"

"Arthur, you have read that letter. Do you not see that its contents are such that nothing now could induce me to become your wife? Do you think your mother the only one that has any pride? I should despise myself were I to 'enter her family' now. She has placed a most effectual bar between us."

They parted. Two days passed on. Mrs. Ogilvie asked no questions, and maintained a mien of unruffled calmness. On the afternoon of the third day the family were sitting in the portico, when a lady came to make a call. To fill up a pause in the conversation, Mrs. Ogilvie asked the common question, "if there was any news?"

"I have not heard any," said her guest. "Oh, no! I'm mistaken, I heard just before I came out that Miss Richards was lying at the point of death with a brain fever, not expected to live till morning."

How unthinkingly we sometimes touch the deepest wounds! Arthur started as if struck to the heart, and over even the lofty brow of Mrs. Ogilvie there came a flush. Mrs. Hurd saw she had said something wrong, and not knowing what it was, or how to remedy the evil, took her leave rather awkwardly.

Arthur did not return that evening, and it was found the next morning that he had passed the night under Fanny Richards' window. The day came when the cherished and beautiful was carried out from her father's house. Mrs. Ogilvie kept her room that day, and when the tolling of the funeral bell began to sound on the air, she covered her face with her hands and listened to it with her haughty form bowed. Little prepared was she for the tidings that reached her before night—tidings that her son Arthur was a maniac. His words and actions for the last three days had been very incoherent. His sisters had ascribed it to his grief, but that night his frantic seizure made the truth only too certain. Too

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much—too much for the poet's heart, the young, sensitive poet's heart, was the cruel thought that but for him Fanny Richards would not have died. The struggle had been for life, and the better part of life had given way.

Mrs. Ogilvie had need of all her trained composure; and truly they who watched her had a new revelation of what pride can effect, even when viewing its own desolating work. In a week or two the young, the gifted Arthur was conveyed to an asylum, and his haughty mother wept those tears which wither and scorch the heart they spring from.

A shadow had fallen upon the brightness of Elm-Grove. Agnes and Ellen no longer used to wander in its elegant grounds, or round the lonely neighborhood. Indeed Ellen was hardly able, for since her brother's mournful departure, her delicate cheek had worn a changing hue, and her step had lost its lightness. There was one walk they always shunned—that which led past the dwelling of Mr. Richards.

A few months rolled on, and Mrs. Ogilvie began to resume her customary employment. In June her youngest son, James, came home from boarding-school, and his presence roused his mother's spirits, though her manner was even more unimpassioned than usual. One stroke was not sufficient to soften that heart.

James' merry temper and ways made Agnes smile again, and nearly brought the old sparkle into Ellen's languid eyes. There was nothing his mother enjoyed more than seeing him row on the river. He was excessively fond of it, and his peculiarly symmetrical form, and graceful, active motions fitted him for it. His tall, elegant figure had always been pronounced strikingly like his mother's, and she never felt prouder of him than when she saw him bending to the oar. Her evident pleasure in this amusement made his pursuit of it the more frequent.

"Are you not going on the water to-day, James?" she would often say, and then if she did not accompany him, would stroll down to the bank of the river to watch him.

One lovely afternoon in August James caught up his cap just as the sun began to bend toward his purple couch. "Mother," he said, "will you not take a row this afternoon? The water is very smooth."

"No, you had better take one of your sisters, James. Come, Ellen, it will do you good."

"Indeed, mamma, I hardly feel equal to it."

"But I would rather you would. Go and get your hat."

Instant obedience to direct commands was a habit with all the children of Mrs. Ogilvie, therefore the last words had not left her lips before Ellen had departed.

Mrs. Ogilvie, with Agnes, walked on the shore, watching James in his graceful exercise till the twilight began to gather, when they returned home. James had gone down the river, out of sight.

The beams of the harvest moon were stealing through the wide casement, when the sound of wheels was heard in the avenue, and then a trampling of feet in the portico. Agnes rose and went to the door.

"What is it, Agnes?" said her mother, "what is the matter? Why do you not speak?"

Agnes tried, but could not.

"Don't take on, ma'am. We've brought him home," said a coarse voice, and pushing past the horror-struck Agnes, two or three rough men laid down before the mother's eyes the lifeless form of her youngest born. With her own hands she put back the dripping hair from his forehead, and read there the impress of death.

"There's the young lady," said another voice, as the insensible Ellen was carried into the room.

"My daughter too!" gasped Mrs. Ogilvie.

"Oh! no, ma'am, she has not been in the water, but she has fainted-like. You see, ma'am, the young gentleman had just turned about to go up stream, and was changing his seat when he stepped on something slippery, and right away lost his balance and fell overboard. He had sunk and risen for the third time before we got to him, and the life was out of him. The young lady has been going from one fainting fit into another ever since."

With more delicacy than those in their station are usually given credit for, the men withdrew, and left the bereaved alone with their grief. Agnes was busy with the servants in attending to her fainting sister, but Mrs. Ogilvie never moved from her kneeling position beside the dead. The direction of the agitated household, with the care of the suffering Ellen, devolved upon Agnes with her bursting heart. Toward midnight she tried to win her mother to her own room, "come away, dear mother," she whispered.

Mrs. Ogilvie heeded her not for a time, and then raising her arms above her head, she groaned out, "would to God that I had died for thee, my son!" Then she rose and kissed the damp brow, and touched the pallid cheeks, so lately glowing with beauty, and folded the hands across the breast, and in bitter silence went away to her own room.

"Oh! but there was agony in Elm-Grove that night! In one chamber the physician stood by

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the scarcely-breathing Ellen, counting the feeble pulse-strokes—by the bedside knelt Agnes, with her hands pressed to her throbbing heart, struggling with her sobs. In the wide drawing-room lay the dead boy, surrounded with weeping neighbors and servants; and in a room above was the deepest anguish of all—such as none save a mother can know.

When the day of the funeral came, Mrs. Ogilvie roused herself from her stupor, and insisted upon attending it. None dared oppose her, and Ellen rose from her bed, and dragged her trembling limbs to the grave. With a tearless eye Mrs. Ogilvie listened to the most touching and beautiful of our church services, even when the first shovel full of earth was thrown upon the coffin, and the solemn words, "Dust to dust, earth to earth, ashes to ashes," accompanied the dull echo of each sod as it fell. But those who gazed on her looked in each other's faces and shuddered.

It was about a month after James' death that Mrs. Ogilvie one evening admitted Mr. Field, her nearest neighbor, and also her lawyer—the family had before been denied to all visitors. About ten o'clock Mr. Field rose to go.

"I'll walk with you down the avenue, sir," said Agnes.

Mr. Field was one of those meditative old gentlemen who walk with their hands clasped behind their backs, and was very fond of Agnes Ogilvie.

"Dear Mr. Field," said she, when they got out of hearing, "I want to speak to you about my sister Ellen. Her health received a great shock by poor Arthur's misfortunes—he was her twin-brother, you know—and now the addition of our last affliction seems to have been too much for her. And mamma does not notice it she is so wrapped up in her sorrow, and I'm afraid to speak to her about it. Ellen has seen the doctor several times, but he doesn't seem to do her any good."

"I see, I see," replied Mr. Field, "Ellen is too delicate to bear these rough blasts of grief. I'll speak to your mother. Where is your Brother Herbert now?"

"Herbert is at the South."

"He's no business there. He ought to be at home attending to his mother and sisters. Yours must be the task, Miss Agnes. You must watch over your sister—and take care of your mother too. She's in a bad way. My poor child! eighteen is very young to be forced to such duties—with your first sorrow lying at your heart too."

Agnes Ogilvie was one of those very few persons who appear better at home than abroad. Her calm, earnest character was little understood. She inherited her mother's pride and dignity, though without the accompanying stiffness and coldness.

Mr. Field fulfilled his promise, and called Mrs. Ogilvie's attention to the state of her eldest daughter's health.

"Let Dr. Winter be told I wish to see him when he calls again," she said to Agnes. "If he does not come to-day, send for him."

To the mother's question, put in a tone which all her efforts could not render firm, the doctor replied, "I really don't know what's the matter with your daughter, madam. She seems to be falling into a gradual decline. She wants rousing. If she could have something that would entertain without fatiguing her it would be well."

"Would a change of climate be beneficial?"

"I think not, madam. I'll do all in my power, and save her if I can."

Why trace the progress of Ellen's decline? It was in "the melancholy days, the saddest of the year," that a proud monument was raised in the village grave-yard, bearing the inscription, "To the memory of Ellen Ogilvie, who died November 4th, 1834, aged twenty-one years and two months."

A year rolled away. Mrs. Ogilvie and Agnes were rarely seen out of their own grounds. They dwelt alone in sad seclusion; Agnes mourning for her only sister, and Mrs. Ogilvie's thoughts continually fastened on the graves where her children were lying. She was much subdued. Her health had become very infirm, and she required the constant attention of her daughter. But before the twelve-month had passed, Agnes became aware that her mother had some new grief unknown to her. She began to sell portions of her property, and every time a letter from Herbert arrived, the shadow on her brow was deeper. Mr. Field, who transacted all her business, hinted that he thought this was for Herbert. And so in truth it was. He was dissipated and extravagant, and far exceeded his mother's liberal allowance. Oh, surely it needed not this fresh grief to hasten the silvering of Mrs. Ogilvie's raven hair. Herbert had been her favorite, and like most favorites, it was his lot to pain his mother's heart the most deeply. In a few months, she sold still more of her estate and adopted many plans of retrenchment. Soon she sent again for Mr. Field to draw a heavy mortgage. In her earlier days he would not have ventured to remonstrate, but he now spoke plainly.

"Indeed, madam, I cannot bear to do this. Herbert cannot expect it from you. I hear he's dissipated. I should think his excesses would

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arouse your resentment rather than such strange liberality."

"I knew not that you were aware of the destination of my funds, Mr. Field, but it is vain to talk to me. My indignation has indeed been awakened, but do you think I will permit the proud name of Ogilvie to come to beggary and disgrace?"

"It is injustice to yourself, madam—to your remaining child."

"It is useless to argue with me, Mr. Field," repeated the lady.

The glory of two more summers came and went. Herbert Ogilvie breathed his last in a distant Southern city. His mother's almost unlimited supply of money had completed his ruin. When the news was brought her, she merely bowed her head in silence. On an examination of her account, Mr. Field found that she had so involved her property for her son, that there was not enough left for a decent support. When he told this to Agnes, she wept unrestrainedly.

"There! there!" said Mr. Field, after a pause, "quit crying, my dear child. I am an old friend of your mother's, and have always loved you dearly. I have not lived fifty-seven years in this world without gaining some of its dross, and I have neither wife nor child to claim anything from me. It will afford me real happiness, Agnes, to supply your mother's wants."

"Mr. Field, you are too good. I wish I could thank you as you deserve!"

"I don't like to speak to your mother about it, though. I'm afraid she might not consent. You must persuade her, my dear child, as a favor to me."

Agnes sought her mother's room that night, and after placing before her the state of her affairs, related Mr. Field's generous offer. Her mother did not seem to understand her at first, but when she did, she raised her head with all her old haughtiness, and drew up her stately form to its fullest height.

"Accept it," she exclaimed, "never, never! What? live on charity! And is it a daughter of mine who proposes such a thing?"

"What else can we do, mamma?" said Agnes, in a low voice.

"Anything but that! Die in the fields sooner, die if must be. Go, Agnes, go. Never speak to me of such a thing again."

Agnes told this to Mr. Field the next day. "Oh! what can we do?" she continued, "I would gladly work at anything I could do without leaving home. I cannot leave mamma, you know."

"No, and I know of nothing you could do here that would bring you anything like a support. It is well for your mother that it is not in her power to sell Elm-Grove—it would kill her to leave it."

Mr. Field rose and walked to the window, cleared his throat several times, drew out his watch and put it in again without looking at it, and then came back.

"Agnes, my dear, I do not see any other way than for you to become my wife. Your mother would not object to receiving anything from her own daughter."

Agnes turned very pale.

"I'm aware that it is putting your love for your mother to a severe test, but I see no other way. I need not tell you that as my wife you would meet with the greatest respect and tenderness. Don't decide now. Take time to think of it," and Mr. Field, seizing his hat, left the house.

When she was alone, Agnes pressed both hands to her forehead, and closed her eyes. In that instant there sprang before her the vision of the years that were gone. She saw the forms of her two dead brothers, of him, the brightest and most gifted, whose darkened mind held him imprisoned; of the fair sister who lay beneath the church-yard mould; she heard the ringing laughter and joyous tones that once swept through the wide halls and over the sunny parterres of her home. She recalled the glad dreams of seventeen, and now—she opened her eyes and looked around upon each vacant chair.

"A vacant chair—
How sadly eloquent its teachings are."

Agnes Ogilvie spent the hours of that night in communing with her own heart. She calmly viewed the path pointed out to her. Her love for her mother, always strong, had been deepened into intensity since she had been left alone with her, and now love and duty seemed to point the same way. The struggle was sharp, but she rose resolved for the sacrifice.

The next day she received a note from Mr. Field, stating that business required an absence of a week. The poor girl felt as if a reprieve had been granted her. When he returned, he learned her determination. "May heaven bless you!" said the good man, with tears in his eyes. "All in human power shall be done to prevent you ever repenting your decision."

Then he sought an interview with Mrs. Ogilvie, and asked her daughter's hand. She roused herself from the apathy in which she now lived, only so far as to ascertain that it was Agnes' wish, and then consented.

Arrayed as a bride, the beautiful Agnes Ogilvie

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calmly spoke the fitting words. On the surpliced figure of the clergyman she fixed her dark eyes, till at last the ritual was said, and the service was ended. She turned from the altar, and the prospect of the future lay clear before her—clear and cold.

Mr. Field took up his residence at Elm-Grove, so that Agnes was not separated from her mother. On that lady's next birth-day, he gave Agnes a most generous deed of settlement upon her. And as she listened to his kind, tender words, and saw the pleasure with which her mother received the paper from her hand, she felt that the sacrifice had not been in vain.

On flowed the current of tame, monotonous life at Elm-Grove—on—on—sometimes wearily on to the lovely young creature who dwelt there. With a heart teeming with unfulfilled dreams, forever unsatisfied longings, and wasted sympathies, she often pined for rest—unbroken rest. There are some, perhaps many girls who could make the sacrifice she had made, but few indeed who could carry out the work so faithfully. She performed the arduous and harassing task of attending upon her mother, patiently went through her varied duties, and was the joy, the daily and living joy of good Mr. Field's heart. But none knew how oft those night-black eyes were raised to heaven, and the small hands clasped in the effort at resignation.

There was one more grief for Mrs. Ogilvie before she sunk into the grave. She was summoned to her son Arthur. His health had been failing for some time, and as that of the body decayed, that of the mind revived. He was now unable to leave his bed.

"Weep not, my mother," whispered the faint voice of the dying, "weep not for me! I have been spared much affliction, and now I am going to my sister and my brothers."

"Forgive! forgive!" she groaned.

"Mother, dear mother, most freely are you forgiven. Weep no more for me!"

All was over at last, and Mrs. Ogilvie turned to her only remaining child.

"A little longer, Agnes," she said. "The night is at hand. I am only now beginning to perceive the last sacrifice you made for me, my child. Do not give way yet. A little while, and I shall lie down to sleep."

About three weeks after Arthur's death, Agnes was called to her mother in the early morning. Mrs. Ogilvie's face wore that hue which humanity wears but once. It was just at dawn, the dreariest hour of all the day. The first faint beams of light were struggling through the air, when Agnes and her husband, with the old servants of the house, gathered around the bed to see the heart-broken die. All was quiet; there were no loud demonstrations of grief. No sound was audible save the ticking of the watch in the doctor's hand, and the irregular breathings of her whom heart and flesh were failing. But the tears poured like rain down every cheek, and loud wailings that none could repress broke forth, when Mrs. Ogilvie, suddenly raising herself in her bed, took the hand of each of her servants in turn, and humbly entreated their forgiveness for her harshness and haughtiness toward them in former times. She went from one to the other, and at last pressing Mr. Field's hand between both her own, she thanked him for his unfailing kindness toward her. "And Agnes," she said, and she drew her daughter to her bosom, "my own Agnes! if a dying mother's blessing can impart happiness, you will be happy."

She sunk back upon her pillows, and closed her eyes.

"She's going now," said the doctor, with professional calmness, "there, gently, gently—she'll be easy soon."

A few more gasping breaths, and then the daughter laid her hand upon her mother's heart, and felt no pulsation.

Agnes lived for one or two years, patiently going through the various forms of life, but with a heart that had long been absent from the scenes of this world. One winter Mr. Field took her to the South, hoping it would benefit her health. She wept at leaving Elm-Grove, for she feared she should never see it more—and it happened even as she had predicted. The place was sold after her death, and the purchaser not wishing to reside there, let the house and grounds fall into mournful decay, only cultivating the farm.

In a distant and sunny clime the mandate went forth again, "room! mother earth, room! the tired and way-worn would lie down 'where the weary are at rest, and the wicked cease from troubling!'"

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A SLIGHT MISTAKE.
BY A. L. OTIS.
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A SLIGHT MISTAKE.

BY A. L. OTIS.

I was sitting one summer evening at our parlor window, looking out upon one of the most retired squares in Philadelphia, and hoping for the arrival of a certain gentleman with whom I some day expected to pass a few important moments before St. Marks' altar, when I was suddenly aware that the person alluded to, had, contrary to his usual custom, approached through the square, and that he was leaning against the tree opposite looking at me. I sprang up joyfully, but he motioned me not to open the door, crossed quickly, and said he could not come in as business required him to hasten down town. Then he said something about my appearance, which, with the accompanying look, sent me for an instant from the window, and when I looked out again he was gone.

I was still enjoying the tremulous pleasure of those delicious words, when I heard a rapid stride in the street, a sudden spring up our doorsteps, and a sharp pull at the bell. I knew it was not *his* step, so I remained sunk in reverie and my easy-chair till the door was thrown open, and Philip R——, my sentimental boy-lover, entered. Imagine, dear reader, a boy of six foot three, and *not* stout in proportion.

He sprang toward me, threw his long limbs in a kneeling attitude before me, and grasping both my hands in his interminable fingers, turned to me a most tragical countenance. I was at last startled from my dream—one of those dreams of which Moore says, that "there is nothing half so sweet in life."

Philip and I gazed at one another. I in half angry and speechless surprise—he in supplication for some time—then he said,

"Is it true? Tell me at once—is it true?"

"What?" I asked, haughtily, still trying to withdraw my hands.

"That you are engaged to Henry D——?"

I was about to ask angrily what right he had to know, when I thought it would be kinder to answer candidly, so I said, "yes, I am, but——"

"But what?—do go on."

"But I didn't think that was anything to you."

"Now that you know it *is* something to me, may I hope you will break this unfortunate engagement, and——"

I opened my eyes in amazement.

"You do love him?" Philip cried, struck by my countenance; and when I turned away, he sprang up and strode through the room, tossing his arms like an insane thrasher with a pair of flails.

"Dolt, fool, idiot, cursed coquetry," &c., were some of his exclamations, in the midst of which he darted from the house.

I could not help laughing, and I laugh yet when I think of it. I know the reader is shocked at my want of humanity, but let him or her read to the end of my tale, and see if I am not justified in doing so.

About an hour after, the same hasty step approached, the same ring at the door alarmed the house, and I trembled lest I should have another scene, but the waiter only handed me a sealed packet and note. The note was as follows:

"Miss C——As a gentleman I beg pardon for my rude departure. After you have read these letters I send you, you will see what a simpleton I have been. But it was all your fault, and to my dying day I will accuse you of coquetry. Nor will I ever forgive you if you do not make all the reparation in your power, by giving these facts to the public, as a warning to all young men who would put faith in woman's truth. Don't spare me. I shall never, probably, either hear of, or see your performance. Certainly if you will name it 'The Slight Mistake' I will never read it, no matter in how interesting a Magazine I may meet with it. I am now well aware from the slight disappointment I feel, that my regard for you was only founded upon vanity which you wilfully gratified. As soon as your engagement becomes known you will probably lose many admirers, as it is likely their devotion is the result of something of the same kind. I have fortunately been undeceived before making myself a fool in the eyes of many people, but do now by all means 'write me down an ass.' It gives me satisfaction to demand this of you, for at the same time you cannot help writing yourself—coquette, Once yours, P. R——."

Although probably Mr. Philip R—— will be as surprised at my complying with his demand, as if he had not suggested it. I take a great deal of pleasure in doing so, hoping to write him

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down what he wishes, at the same time exculpating myself from blame. I know he only sent me his journal because to read such things of herself must make any woman crimson with vexation—but since he has put it in my power I will make it useful.

The first time I saw Philip R —— was on board a sail-boat, in which a large party were enjoying themselves in the Delaware near Burlington. We had been out the whole afternoon of a most oppressively warm day, and as we were all young and thoughtless, did not observe that a thunder-storm was approaching rapidly. We were overtaken and obliged to land. After the storm had subsided we entered the boat, and sailed before almost a gale for home. Philip reached over the side of the boat for something, lost his balance, and after disappearing for an instant, rose far behind us. I never shall forget the look of terror and horrible eagerness that was on his countenance, when I saw him, as I thought, vainly struggling with so dreadful a death. I fainted. When I recovered he was safe, and we still on our way home, our teeth fairly chattering with the cold. Philip especially seemed, in his wet clothes, upon the very point of having a chill. I had two shawls—all the other ladies were sufficiently wrapped up—and I offered one to Philip. He refused bashfully at first, but the gentlemen urging him to take it as he was subject to fever and ague, I rose and threw it over his shoulders. The gentleman I alluded to in the beginning of this narrative, Henry D——, was present. He had only a few moments before whispered some very pleasant words to me, therefore it may be guessed whether I acted thus from any "particular fancy" for Mr. R——, or only from simple dislike to see anybody uncomfortable. But read extracts from his journal giving his account of the affair.

"September 15th.—Went out on a sailing excursion with my friend B——, who invited me to be one of a large party. A very pretty lady, Miss C——, was one of us—and I must have made a great impression upon her, for she fainted when I fell over the side of the boat. I did think then that it was all over with me, but they tacked and took me up—I had a narrow escape though. Miss C—— really must have taken a great fancy to me, for she insisted upon wrapping her own shawl around me lest I should take cold. I was quite pleased with her on the whole, as she is not so silly as most young ladies." A truly boyish remark. He was but seventeen—I twenty. I did not see Master Phil again for a year.

The next time I met him was at a strawberry party and dance in the country. Poor Philip! I pity him yet, when I think of his forlorn appearance that evening, so tall, thin, white and hirsute, asking with importunate bashfulness each of the young ladies in turn to dance with him, and invariably meeting with either a plausible excuse or a haughty refusal My merry little Cousin Sally, who seemed the particular object of his admiration, refused six times to dance with him, and when he asked again said, "oh, no, I can't—four foot one and six foot three should not dance together." Although she meant to ridicule her own size quite as much as his, he could not endure this wound to his vanity, and I felt sorry for his mortification. He caught the expression of my countenance, and instantly asked me for "the pleasure of dancing with me some time that evening." I looked at my tablets—engaged for the next four sets to indifferent persons, and the fifth to Henry. This I determined to sacrifice, and I accepted Mr. Philip for that set, thinking I could make my peace with Henry. I had no opportunity to speak to him, however, till I saw him advance just as Philip was claiming my hand. I said, "Mr. D——, will you excuse me? I wish to dance this set with Mr. R——." He looked contemptuously at Philip, bowed coldly, and went away evidently angry with me. I was very miserable during the dance, but I felt sorry for Philip, and determined he should have some pleasant moments that evening, so I tried to be agreeable. When it was over I looked for Henry, and saw him watching me. I hoped he would come to me, but Philip never left my side for an instant, and he was talking away so eagerly, that Henry I saw would not interrupt. Supper was announced, and Philip took me out Then the party broke up, and Philip offered to escort me home. That was a little more than I could bear. "Thank you," I said, quickly, "but I am provided with an escort," and took the arm of the lady I came with. In the dressing-room I could not help crying a little, because I thought Henry had gone home without speaking to me, but I took care that no one should observe it. When we reached the foot of the stairs there was Philip again, still hopeful. I passed him with scorn, for if I had not expressed my anger I should have burst out crying. Ah, how soon I was happy again—for Henry was waiting outside the door, and as we sauntered home behind Mr. and Mrs. —— he begged my pardon, told me that my conduct was only another instance of my goodness of heart, &c., which made me happier than I had ever been before. Now hear Philips' version in a letter to his cousin, a gentleman with whom I am well acquainted, and whose good opinion I value highly.

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"Dear Bob ******—The lady I spoke to you of, I still continue to find charming—particularly as I really feel flattered by her notice of my humble self. You know how to interpret such tokens as the following, so I write them to you, hoping that if I am deceived, (but I can't be) that you will do me the friendly office of warning me before I commit myself. She always seems to see me, no matter with whom she is at the time talking, and to feel pleasure, or pain, according as I enjoy myself. She preferred dancing with me, though she had previously made a positive engagement to dance with that handsome fellow we met last month, H. D——, she broke that engagement and danced with me! I took her to the supper-table, and she would not trouble me to get her anything scarcely, lest I should not have time to help myself sufficiently—and when I asked her to let me escort her home, you should have seen her disappointment because she had to go with the lady who brought her. I actually thought I saw tears in her eyes as she passed me hastily, not daring to look up."

I wish I could see Mr. Robert H——'s answer. I think I know its import, however, if he wrote at all, for not long after that, I remember that he told me his Cousin Phil was a confounded puppy.

By this time Philip was so well convinced of my affection for him, that everywhere we met he followed me round like an evening shadow, long and disproportioned, with most lack-a-daisical looks, that amused my friends and annoyed myself extremely. Whenever I sang, he would be sure to ask for his favorite song, and then proceed to enumerate such as he wished to hear, as if I sang only for him. When I was conversing with others, he was always at my elbow to say, in a tenderly reproachful tone occasionally, "ah, you are so enthusiastic!" or "I assure you, Mr. So and So, she does not do herself justice—such are not her real opinions, I am sure," as if he were master of my thoughts. If my shawl happened to fall back from my throat, or he fancied my shoes or dress too thin, he would think himself called upon to remonstrate, when perhaps some elderly friend might be present. Yet I bore all patiently, and merely laughed at his boyish importance to myself, carefully refraining from humbling him when there were those present who would witness his discomfiture.

He soon began to visit me frequently in the evening. Many and many a long hour have I spent trying to be pleasant, because I knew my heart was heavy, wishing Henry would not go away whenever he saw Mr. R——'s hat in our hall. He said he could not endure the sight of the bore.

Philip could read well, and I soon found this out. I almost always asked him to read when there were no other visitors. I selected the books, and he really gave me great pleasure by his fine voice and good reading. I thanked him, therefore, sincerely, and I thank him still for that. One evening we were interrupted by the arrival of some very uninteresting people, and they stayed so late that Philip had to go before they left. I was at the piano, and the music book was open between the other persons in the room and myself. He came to say good night, and stooped to whisper, that "he was so provoked at the interruption," &c. As my hands were running over the keys, and I wished to drown my remark, I leaned forward that he and not the visitors might hear me say, "I was disappointed too. But come soon and finish reading that beautiful poem."

"Would it give you pleasure to have me do so?"

"Certainly," I said. Before I guessed his intention he had kissed me.

I dared not stop in the flourish with which I was ending a little waltz, lest the persons present should suspect something, but I burned with repressed anger, resolving that Henry should chastise the fellow the very next day. I thought better of that, however. Now for his journal.

* * * "She let me kiss her—by Jove—yes, the darling. I was bidding her good-bye, when she suddenly leaned toward me, to say she hoped I would not stay long without coming to see her, for it gave her great pleasure to have me come, and she looked so lovely, and so sorry that we had not had the evening to ourselves, that I could not help at least trying to press a kiss on those sweet lips. I succeeded so far as to touch her cheek, and she did not resent it in the least, but blushed rosy red, and played on to hide her confusion. What will Bob say when I tell him this?"

Ah, humiliation to think how we may be misunderstood! Philip came the next day, but I would not see him, and I gave orders that he should never be admitted. After he had been sent away several times, he wrote me such a penitent, boyish letter, that I saw my foolishness in feeling any further resentment. The next time he came he found me at home. I received him very coldly, and was not so mercifully afraid of hurting his feelings after this. He resumed his readings, and I began again to enjoy them. We have a grate, and burn coal. One evening Philip sat so near the fire, which was blazing brightly, that I saw he was seriously incommoded with the heat, yet to be near me, to whom he was reading, he could not change his place. I rose

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softly, so as not to interrupt, and put the screen before him. Such a look as met me! Instead of the simple "thank you," which would have been all-sufficient for such a trifling service, his face glowed with a gratitude I did not deserve, and which I resented. An old lady who was present said to me, after he had taken leave,

"What a presumptuous young man! He is one who must be treated with the utmost severity. Snub him every chance you get, my dear, unless you wish to be bored to death. Above all things have no mercy for any of his sufferings, mental or personal. Never do him any such little kindness again, he misinterprets it."

After this I became much more spirited in my conduct toward him, and finally reduced him to something like humility, by what often seemed to me positive rudeness. But I could not help it—the least kindness was presumed upon. I had to suffer yet one more bitter mortification.

Philip came one Sunday to take me to church. I did not like this, and told him so, but he did not go away, and I was obliged to walk down street with him. He left me at the church door, however, and presently I heard voices beneath the window at which I sat. One that I did not recognize said,

"Say, Phil, who was that modest-looking girl you came with?"

"That's nothing to you," was the answer.

"Ha, ha!" laughed the other—"a great mystery! But I'll cut you out, Phil. Nothing easier—I'll cut you out."

"If I did not feel tolerably secure I might teach you better than to interfere, but the matter is pretty much settled, and you may swagger on."

"Whew—engaged, Phil? Then I beg your pardon—didn't imagine such a thing. Why you're a lucky fellow. Worth trying for—that lady is."

I was astonished, well as I knew Philip, to hear him say, "why, yes, if I had had to try, I should have done so, no doubt, but——"

"But the peach fell into your mouth?"

"Not exactly, only as Byron says, you know.

> "It is in vain that we would coldly gaze
> On such as smile upon us; the heart must
> Leap kindly back to kindness."

I became positively sick, but before long anger sustained me, and I determined never to speak to the contemptible fellow again. The next time I saw him was upon the occasion of his abrupt entrance already described. Since my marriage Philip has been heard to hint—that he knew my heart did not go with my hand, that I was governed in my choice by an arbitrary father, &c.

Is not this intolerable? If I have been to blame for it I am sure it was unwittingly, and all I can now do is to caution all gentlemen in Philip R——'s position. They may rest assured that the lady who can feel cool enough, and free enough to do for them the little kindnesses I meant to Philip—is *not* in love with them. Every young lady will feel the truth of this story.

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HUSBANDS IN LITTLE THINGS.

BY JANE WEAVER.

"Ah, Brown, how are you?"

"Why, Jones, is that you? How d'ye do, my good fellow."

Such were the exclamations with which two neighbors greeted each other, as they met, one evening about sundown, on their way home from business. After a few inquiries about each other's families, for both were married men; and the stereotyped complaints respecting the hard times, of which merchants complain as proverbially as farmers do of bad crops; Brown said to his friend,

"Suppose we try a few oysters, Jones. I've found a place where they keep capital ones. You don't have supper quite yet?"

"No, there's plenty of time. I'll go with pleasure."

So the two husbands turned aside into a saloon, where, in the course of an hour's chat, they managed to spend half a dollar each, partly in oysters, partly in brandy and water, "to make the oysters," as they said, "digest."

Meantime Mrs. Jones, the youngest of the two wives, sat wondering why her husband did not come home. She had been into the kitchen, two or three times, to see that supper was ready and being kept hot, for Mr. Jones was one of those men who neither like to wait for a meal, nor eat a cold one. At last, full an hour after his usual time, the husband made his appearance.

"Take up supper," cried Mrs. Jones, running to the kitchen door. "It's Mr. Jones, I'll let him in myself," and, as she spoke, she breathlessly hurried to admit her husband.

"Supper's on the table, Jones," she said, as she clung to him. "I've made your favorite cake, and hope it will turn out well. Only I'm afraid its half spoilt by the delay. But I suppose business kept you, and so it can't be helped."

The husband did not contradict his wife. But, when he came to try the cake, he pushed it away.

"Isn't it right?" said the wife, the tears coming into her eyes.

"Yes! it will do," answered Mr. Jones, "only it's not quite up to the thing, and besides I'm not hungry."

Poor lady! She fancied that these last words were said in order to spare her feelings, and that the reason her husband did not eat was because the cake was bad. Her afternoon's happiness had consisted in thinking how agreeably her husband would be surprised at this little delicacy. But this was all destroyed now. She had no appetite herself to eat, and really fancied the cake tasted flat; in short, it was as much as she could do to command her feelings.

Her husband saw, and partially understood, her emotion. A single word from him could have explained all, and he knew it; but he was ashamed, at first, to say he had been loitering on his way home; and afterward it was too late. At last he became angry at his wife for being hurt, as men strangely will when themselves in fault. It was a miserable evening for poor Mrs. Jones.

Meantime Mr. Brown had also reached his home. His wife also was waiting for him.

"Where have you been, my dear?" she said. "How late you are! But come, don't lose a moment, supper's waiting, and I want you to take me to the concert to-night." And, as she spoke, she led the way briskly to the supper-room.

"A concert!"

"Yes, my dear," answered the wife, turning cheerfully around, "and I've promised Sister Jane to meet her there. If we don't hurry, all the best seats will be filled before we arrive."

"Really, my love," stammered Mr. Brown, as he took his seat, and began curiously to examine his fork, not caring to meet his wife's eyes, "I'm afraid——"

He stopped. Mrs. Brown's face fell. She knew, from his manner, what was coming. But she ventured, for once, on a remonstrance.

"It's only twenty-five cents a piece," she said, "and surely we can afford that. I don't go anywhere, as you know. I feel as if I could enjoy this concert."

Thus urged, Mr. Brown would, perhaps, have gone, if he had not already spent half a dollar himself. But that settled the affair. One extravagance, as he reasoned, was sufficient. He did not, however, tell his wife why he persisted in his refusal.

"I'd go—in a minute—if I could afford it, my

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love," he stammered, "but fifty cents here, and fifty cents there, soon runs up—we may live yet to see the day when we'll want even that sum."

Mr. Brown, like many others, was always ready to preach, but slow to practice. Scarcely a day passed that he did not spend something in an unnecessary lunch: but he never thought of curtailing this item of foolish expense; it was invariably his wife's comfort and recreation that was made to suffer under the plea of economy.

Mrs. Brown sighed. She had been married long enough to know that expostulation was useless with a husband, at least with Mr. Brown. But the disappointment was greater than she thought it wise to show.

Her husband, however, saw her feelings; was vexed; and sat, for the rest of the evening, silent and sulky. This did not add to the happiness of his wife, so that the hours wore away gloomily enough.

There are a great many husbands like Mr. Brown, and quite as many, we suspect, like Mr. Jones. In a thousand ways, indeed, wives suffer from the selfishness of those who have sworn "to love and cherish" them, but alas! forget to keep their vows, at least in little things.

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THRONING AND DETHRONING.
BY ELISE GRAY.
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THRONING AND DETHRONING.

BY ELISE GRAY.

In the solemn shadows of a forest wandered a mortal of a thoughtful mien. Yearning was her eye, for in the void of her spirit she longed for a God to enthrone and worship there. While in the dim wood she strayed, and listened to the strange whispers of the grand old trees as they bowed their high heads; their voices mingled with a low strain coming from the depths of her own soul, and its burden ever was—"something beyond." When too, life's gayest, loudest music rang in her ear, and its dazzling lights danced on her path, often came the pining like burning thirst that must find a fountain, and the low pleading voice within rose to a wild cry of need.

At last a fellow mortal came, of noble form and brow, and eloquent eye and lips. Soon was the light of that eye more to the maiden than all the glories of earth, and the voice more than all its music, for they beamed and spoke a love truer than the stars, deeper than the ocean, and sweeter and gentler than the dew.

In a rich garden where with the summer night air mingled the breath of flowers from many climes, secluded in a bower where stole no witnessing glance, but only moonbeams pierced the canopy of roses, there chose the maiden the God of her devotion. In her soul's most secret cell raised she an altar, and from a pure, deep well within her heart drew precious pearls to gem that altar, and there placed an image of the mortal she had made her God. Then to a changeless, willing homage was she dedicate. Beautiful and tireless was the solitary worship in that secret place of the soul. Not seven times a day did her thoughts retire there, nor three times turn her eye inward to the sacred shrine, but from the morning's dim dawn to the evening's grey, was there a new presence in the maiden's life, and the charmed eye could not cease from gazing.

* * * * * * *

* * * Traveller that wandering o'er the earth, dost seek to know those rites of worship man doth ever pay; turn from the dim cathedral where the solemn organ peals or the mournful miserere makes thee weep; where crowned heads and robed forms bow, and poet and philosopher are kneeling. Turn from these. Linger not before the strange orgies of the dark-minded pagan. Look not at the wreathed idol and the offerings at its feet, and the costly incense.

Come far away, and draw the veil from the deep place of a woman's heart, and see the rites of *her* eager worship. Now watch the maiden of of the secret shrine.

She is offering sacrifices on that pearly altar. What are they? Words cannot tell—they are things of the soul—hoardings of the heart, which may not be named as are the treasures of earth, dug from its mines, or sailing o'er the seas.

She is twining the image with wreaths of flowers—the heart's own blossoms—of strange beauty and perfume; nourished by its vital vein, watered by tears of overflowing affection.

A torch is burning on the altar. Precious is the light, for Hope and Love feed it, and the fire is the union of two flames. From it rises holy incense—not like the smoke of meaner fires; but a mist of beauteous hues; and as it ascends, enclouds the image, so that if the idol be not really beautiful, it hath glorious colors to the worshipper's eye. * * * * * Alas! she dreameth not that as a mountain mist, so shall this pass away, and the torch go out in darkness.

Once while the maiden worshipped, *Truth* entered with a kindly, cautious tread, and gently said, "Erring child—I must wound thee—I must tell thee of devotion wasted—of tenderness poured forth like water on the ice-glazed rock—of wealth lavished to bring thee nothing back. The mortal thou hast chosen to worship hath form of mould divine—of noble brow, and eye of light, but the *soul* within is *not* noble.

Too poor to offer thee gifts great as thine, it is too mean to prize thy pearls but as sacrifices to its pride of thine homage.

Then the listener fixed on Truth a gaze of indignation, and sternly said, "Thou art Slander or Envy. Away, for holy ground is sacrileged beneath thy feet."

But Truth still lingered, and her calm eyes filled with pitying tears. When the maiden saw those tears, the flash of anger quickly vanished from her own eyes, and raising them in wild agony, she cried, "Oh, Truth, I *must* believe!" Then the smitten one sank down as if Death had touched her; but the painful breath came again, and the pulse throbbed hot and quick; though she wished the gentle breeze would refuse to fan her, and the life blood freeze at its fountain. Then she sternly said, "I will destroy

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the beauty of the place where I have worshipped." So she tore from the image the wreaths of flowers, still fresh with her heart's own life. The pearly altar was marred, and the image crushed and cast away. The bright torch was put out, and the beautiful mist cloud vanished.

* * * * A few days pass—yet to the sufferer as a long life's history—the noonday as the midnight—all darkness and tempest—wild fever and pain.

* * * * * * It is a summer night, of balmy air and pearly sky. The maiden shuns the light of moon and stars, and wanders again in the shadowy forest.

Past now the burning fever and the piercing pain. She is risen in the icy coldness of despair. No more tears—no more tenderness—no more eager yearning in the dim eyes. No more pining in the soul. Earth hath no more for her to want. What now of the secret shrine and the image in the beautiful mist—all empty—desolate now.

A low voice of wailing is in the solitude; and these are the words of woe. "Oh, idol, all unworthy of the throne I gave thee, as once I worshipped, so I loathe thee now. It is not *thee* I mourn. Ah, I bewail the golden days and silvery nights, when heeding neither sun nor star, I did but live in adoring thee. Ah, holy vows—beautiful homage, how *wasted!*

And ye withered flowers—I would not wreathe you more, where once ye twined. Alas! that thus I did devote the bright blossoms of my heart. How are ye wasted!

Altar in ruins—alas! that I have garnished, thus to see thee now. I mourn the jewels that on thee I wasted.

And the torch—it is gone out. Oh, the darkness, the dreariness!

Alas that living Hope and burning Love should turn to dead, cold ashes, lying forever on the soul's altar, never more to kindle one glowing spark, never to send up holy incense.

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DANCING, THEATRES, THE OPERA.
BY E. J. TILT, M. D.
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DANCING, THEATRES, THE OPERA.

BY E. J. TILT, M. D.

DANCING in itself is excellent exercise. The ancients made it a part of their admirable system of gymnastics, and combined with music they thereby succeeded in calming mental derangement—an application lately revived with great utility in institutions devoted to the treatment of insanity; but there is nothing hygienic in the dancing of the present day, nor in the hours of its performance. Still we cannot admit the baneful influence which some medical ascetics have ascribed to this exercise, nor agree with some German writers that waltzing causes the degeneration of the race. We have no hesitation in saying that a party, now and then, is an excellent means of keeping down the redundant spirits of excitable girls, or of throwing a little life into those that are chlorotic. But there is a difference between a party now and then, and the daily succession of evening amusements. We might urge numerous reasons showing the evils to be derived from the aguish existence of the votaries of fashion, and perhaps none, after all, would be so convincing as the loss of personal beauty, for no constitution can withstand constant excitement; and the inevitable consequence of turning night into day soon turns the bloom of the damask to the tints of the yellow rose, while emaciation soon destroys all youthful appearance of form, and at the end of the season blooming girls have become semi-animous wrecks.

Dancing we have allowed to be good, but we must not omit mentioning what must be evident to all, that there are different modes of going through the very same dances; and even in the best circles gentlemen sometimes permit themselves to dance in a manner not altogether dictated by decorum. More than once have we heard of fashionable dressmakers effectually silencing the complaints made by their fair customers, that the flowers for the corsage of an evening dress were not sufficiently good, by saying, "We never put any better, and you will find them quite flat and destroyed before the party is over."

Whether this is as contrary to morality as it is to hygiene, we leave to the decision of experienced mothers who may remember what effect waltzing had upon themselves. In a medical point of view we must observe, that women who have any tendency to diseases of the heart, the lungs, or the brain, should certainly abstain from waltzing, the gyratory motion of which must be prejudicial by its determining the blood to those organs.

Dramatic representations have so powerfully contributed to the advancement of human intellect, and are so susceptible of being enlisted in the cause of morality, and for the propagation of every ennobling virtue, that we cannot understand why they should now be so often devoted to the glorification of the ruling passion. Farce, comedy, melo-drama, or tragedy—it matters not which, for all are stuffed full of love—all hinge on matrimony, even if they do not derive their piquancy from something less fitted for the understanding of a young lady. Now all this may do neither good nor harm to those whose characters are formed; but we are of opinion that it is better to keep a girl from them as long as possible.

Admitting even that the stage does not openly preach vice now, as in the days of Sheridan, we should still observe on the theatrical performances of the present day, that it would be a grave and melancholy attempt to compute the amount of evil influence that plays have exercised on the malleable minds of youth during the long period of their admired representation. What contradictions have they not afforded to the lessons of the fireside and the promptings of a sound heart and a well-trained mind.

Instead of borrowing moral filth or melo-dramatic horrors from the French stage, why do not our dramatic writers, since they lack original inspiration, seek that of nobler models?—why not in Calderon, for instance, the greatest of all dramatists, whose stage conceptions of things are pure, and in harmony with Christian love, seen in its light, and painted with its celestial colors?

If what we have said of dancing and theatres be true, what must be their effects when combined with painting, in that most wonderful invention of modern times—the Opera?

Some people there are, indeed, blessed with a constitutional coldness which nothing can warm; but to others the Opera may be a potent engine of mischief, whenever it is not made a powerful

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lever to ennoble humanity. The animated dialogue requires the most passionate poetry to express the enthusiasm of feeling. The emotions are represented to be so intense, that in the language of music alone can accents be found sufficiently acute or sufficiently imposing to express their overwhelming grandeur. The human mind is then represented in so deep a paroxysm, that it disdains the slow medium of words to convey its meaning, but adopts the instantaneous, silent eloquence of look and gesture; and is not the whole of man supposed to be so *possessed*, that his very limbs are impelled to movements, rhythmic, poetical, and in harmonious unison with the exalted state of all the other faculties? And is not all this represented in the midst of fascinating scenery, ever varying in changes which impress the mind with the conviction of its reality? Such is the Opera; and whenever it seeks to take the human heart by assault, attacking it in its weakest part, then, in our humble opinion, would it be advisable to keep sensitive young ladies from it, at least until they are married. Why should not the same magnificent machinery be more frequently made use of for the glorification of so many other noble emotions dear to the human feelings? Is the historic page so poor in scenes of heroic patriotism, that none can be found grand enough to be adorned by the combined influence of painting, music, and poetry? "Masaniello," "William Tell," "Fidelio," and many others, not only interest us, but show that the Opera may be made a means of ennobling man.

Without wishing to see the Opera annihilated, we may hope to see it purified, renewed, ennobled; and so, doubtless, does Carlyle, who objects to it on the ground of its unveracity. He does not see the meaning of "women whistling and spinning there in strange, mad vortexes, and then suddenly fixing themselves motionless, each upon her left or right great toe, with the other leg stretched out at an angle of ninety degrees—as if you had suddenly pricked into the floor, by one of their points, a pair, or rather a multitudinous cohort, of mad, restlessly jumping and clipping scissors, and so bidding them rest with opened blades, and stand still, in the devil's name! A truly notable motion; marvelous, almost miraculous, were not the people there so used to it; motion peculiar to the Opera—perhaps the ugliest, and surely the most difficult, ever taught a female creature in this world." His stern mind cannot imagine either why music, divine music, should be "condemned to go mad and burn herself for a kind of service which is rather Paphian, on such a funeral pile."

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THE OLD MAID AND HER PETS.
BY MRS. COROLLA H. CRISWELL.
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THE OLD MAID AND HER PETS.

BY MRS. COROLLA H. CRISWELL.

Aunt Maria lived in an old-fashioned house in the country, where nobody ever visited her except her neighbors, who generally came on business—that is to say, they came to obtain from her, advice both for bodily and mental ailments. She was quite a physician in her way, and certainly her remedies were very efficacious. Besides, she was reputed a sybil—a true prophetess—for her predictions seldom proved false—and many a love-lorn swain and sighing lassie bent their footsteps at early morn or late at eve, to Aunt Maria's lonely dwelling.

Now, she was as kind-hearted and good an old maid as any one ever knew. All her neighbors loved her sincerely, and in return for her many kind offices, did all in their power to render her life easy and comfortable.

Her chief happiness, and I may say delight, was in her *pets*, which I shall enumerate: three cats, two Maltese kittens, one parrot, one monkey, two canaries, six rabbits, two squirrels, one poodle, one Guinea pig, a white rat, and a great black Newfoundland. That is all I remember—there might have been more—but these will do to illustrate my story.

Well, something new happens everywhere every day—and it so happened that a stranger came to dwell in the little village I am telling you of; and in truth, he was the *strangest* stranger that ever was seen by the good people of that place. He was a tall, thin, middle-aged man, had a hump on his back, and was blind of one eye—and of all the countenances *you* ever saw, his had the queerest, most grotesque expression.

Well, dear reader, this strange stranger, who called himself John Strange, settled down very quietly in a little dwelling, about a hundred yards from that of Aunt Maria. This good lady, dating from the arrival of said stranger, became very unsettled in mind and body, people wondered what made her look and act so strange as she continually did—but although *they* wondered, *she* wondered a great deal more.

One night, just after sunset, in the month of November, Aunt Maria was alone in her pleasant sitting-room. No, not exactly *alone*—for all her pets surrounded her—the parrot, the canaries, and the squirrels in their respective cages, the white rat and the Guinea pig sleeping quietly together in a little box upon a shelf, the monkey playing with the rabbits in a corner, the poodle sitting in his mistress' lap, the cats and kittens snoozing together on the hearth-rug, and the great Newfoundland squatting before the fire, his red tongue lolling out with the heat, and looking very sagaciously in Aunt Maria's face. Indeed, it would have made an interesting picture—this "happy family"—even Barnum might have envied, had he looked on.

There was silence in the room, until some one gently tapped at the door. Aunt Maria started, but said, "come in!"

A modest, smiling, country lassie then glided to the side of the sybil, as the villagers called her, and, dropping upon her knees, said in a fairy voice, "tell my fortune, please."

The good woman laid her hand caressingly on her young head. "Yes, Phebe."

"Oh, ho!" screamed the parrot, winking one eye, "*I'll* tell your fortune."

"Hush, Poll! Your hand, Phebe. Ah! you have quarreled with your lover—jealousy—ah! have a care—what's this? Phebe! you are wrong—make up with him and yours shall be a happy lot. That's all I can tell you *now*—leave me!"

"Go away!" cried Poll. Phebe, kissing the sybil's hand, departed.

Tap! tap! on the window shutter—tap! tap! tap!

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"Bow wow! bow wow, wow, wow!" barked the big dog.

"G-r-r-r-r! snap! snap! snap!" said the poodle.

"Silence! Bepps! be still! Cupid!"

Tap! tap! rap! rap! on the door.

"Spirit rappers!" screamed Poll.

"Come—in," said Aunt Maria, hesitatingly.

The door opened, and, strange to relate, the stranger, John Strange, stood before her.

The dogs growled and barked—the cats and kittens puffed out their tails and *humped* up their backs as if in derision—the rabbits hid themselves under a corner of the carpet—the squirrels stopped whirling their wheels and flew into their little house—the monkey grinned and chattered—but the canaries slept on their perches, and the white rat and Guinea pig were oblivious. The parrot alone welcomed the intruder with, "stop thief! I'll have you hanged!"

"SILENCE!" roared the stranger, stamping his foot. In a moment the room was as still as the noiseless desert. Every creature was dumb and motionless, not even excepting the sybil herself.

"Woman!" said John Strange, taking hold of a chair.

"Well," was her reply.

"Do you know my destiny? Do you know *your own* destiny?"

"I may tell yours—but mine is unknown to me."

He smiled a ghastly smile. "Tell mine—and I will impart yours."

The sybil started. "How?"

"Go on!" he impatiently exclaimed, stamping on the floor with so much force as to frighten the good lady's pets half out of their senses.

Aunt Maria, with great repugnance, took the strange man's hand and looked upon it. She became disturbed, and almost trembled.

"Well," said the man, his harsh features strangely softening, "what are your discoveries?"

The sybil, with a pale cheek, replied—"you are not what you seem. You are neither blind nor deformed. Your name is not Strange," she faltered.

"Go on—go on!"

"Years ago—you *loved* a young girl somewhat older than yourself—you were to marry her—but poverty prevented it. You went to foreign lands, and returned rich and in disguise——"

"Yes, yes, I did. Go on!"

The sybil had fallen back on her chair trembling and pale.

"Maria! let me tell *your* fortune!" and he knelt at her feet and took her hand.

"I returned in disguise to know whether my early love had remained true to me—*she had!* and I have returned to marry YOU!"

With a sudden movement, he threw off his coat, cast away the roll of cotton that formed "the hump," and then jerking the patch from his eye, stood before Aunt Maria a tolerably good-looking man of thirty-three. With a scream of delight, she flung her arms around him, exclaiming—"Joseph Truman! why did I not know you! And will you—will you marry an old woman like me?"

"Thirty-seven is not old, dear Maria—and time has not robbed you of your comeliness yet. Your heart is *young* still—is it not, my friend?"

"It is, Joseph, it is!" and her eyes beamed fondly upon him as he pressed a kiss upon her yet unfaded cheek.

It was not a tableau of youth and beauty—but it was one of truth and happiness, constancy and love.

Aunt Maria's pets were all asleep—the room was still and calm, and pleasantly lighted by the glowing embers—and as the reunited lovers sat there hand-in-hand silently looking into each others eyes, they felt that this holy, happy hour was the reward of years of constancy.

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THE INTIMATE FRIEND.
BY E. W. DEWEES.
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pg. 219

THE INTIMATE FRIEND.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

When little Kate Fernley first came home from boarding-school, her "education finished," she was the prettiest, brightest fairy that ever glanced like golden sunlight before an admiring lover's eyes. So, at least, thought Harry Broadwood, a young gentleman of independent fortune, who lived in her neighborhood; and who, being very young and enthusiastic, fell instantly, deeply and irretrievably in love with her.

Kate was small—considerably under middle size; but her figure was graceful and airy, as a spire of grass swaying in the wind—her hair was black, and waved naturally round a brow of purest white, beneath which, eyes of clear, heavenly blue gleamed tenderly, and merrily, by turns; a bright rose color dyed her rounded cheeks; a neck graceful and white as that of the beauteous Helen, and hands and arms of exquisite symmetry—such were some of Katy's external charms; add to these manners careless, graceful, and tender as those of a child, and you may, perhaps, imperfectly picture to yourself a being so very lovely.

Young Broadwood was completely bewitched by her; he found all the time not spent in her society intolerably dull, and by some pretence or other, managed to be almost constantly with her. Of course, this being the case, he could not be long in discovering that Kate was absorbed by one idea—one sentiment—that of the most romantic, and devoted attachment to her "intimate friend," Leonora Stanley. Did he praise a song, "oh, dear Leonora sings that *so* well;" did he admire a drawing—how glad she would be if he could only be favored with a glance at Leonora's drawings. Did he point out a fine view—Kate did *so* wish Leonora were there to enjoy it—as though Leonora, alone, of all the world, were capable of doing so. Worse still—whether her baffled admirer attempted to read, talk, sing, or amuse his little tormentor in any way, most ill-timed comparisons would continually steal unawares into her unschooled, and unguarded speech, such as—"that is a very charming story you have just been reading, Mr. Broadwood; but my dear Leonora has quite spoiled me for any reading but her own—she does read *so* splendidly—quite a different thing from reading as one commonly hears it"—and carried away by enthusiasm for her friend, she would be entirely unconscious of the very unpleasant conclusions forced upon her companion, and his mortification would pass unobserved. Young Broadwood began to grind his teeth with vexation whenever he heard Leonora's name mentioned.

Of course such dear friends as Kate and Leonora were also close correspondents. Never since the world was made was there such indefatigable letter-writing—such passing and repassing of lengthy epistles.

One afternoon young Broadwood called on his pretty neighbor to ask her to walk with him—"I would with the greatest pleasure," she replied, "but there is a letter to Leonora which I *must* write——"

"Nonsense," cried Broadwood, losing his patience, "you wrote to her yesterday, and the day before, and the day before that—you *can* have nothing more to write about."

"That is all *you* know about it," returned Kate, quite nettled; "pray don't wait for me, Mr. Broadwood, if you are disposed for walking. It will take me all the afternoon to write my letter, for it must be a full one, as my last two were very short." She smiled half in malice, half kindly, and tripped up stairs.

Young Broadwood, anxious above all things to convince Kate, (he could not deceive himself) that he could greatly enjoy a walk without her, sallied forth, whistling a lively air to conceal his vexation.

As he was crossing the lawn before the house, a sweet, rich voice called to him from the window—"Mr. Broadwood!—Mr. Broadwood!" He looked back—Kate, with her pen in her hand, was standing at her window, and bending forward to speak to him. Her attitude was strikingly graceful, and her lovely face was full of animation.

"She's angelic, by Jove," muttered Broadwood, who suddenly conceived the hope that she had relented, and would accede to his request; a few bounds brought him beneath the window.

"Might I trouble you, Mr. Broadwood," said Kate, smiling pleasantly, "as you are *going* to walk, to direct your steps to the village post-office, and see if there is a letter for me from Leonora?"

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Broadwood turned hastily aside that he might not betray the irritation this ill-timed request excited, and the words—"I be hanged if I do," were ready to burst from his lips, when Kate shyly added—

"I shall not flatter you by intimating that my request is perhaps a *ruse* to ensure myself the pleasure of seeing you soon again—but if you *choose* so to construe it, you may."

His good-humor completely restored, Broadwood departed, and ere long returned with the expected letter. Kate, who had come bounding to meet him, took it with heightened color, and sparkling eyes, and her young admirer sighed as he asked himself what he would not give to know that a letter from him, would be received with equal rapture.

The missive in question conveyed the transporting intelligence that the beloved Leonora was actually coming, on the day after the morrow, to make the delighted Kate a visit. Never was any creature more overjoyed than Katy at this sudden stroke of good fortune; her whole face and figure were radiant with pleasure. Secretly annoyed, young Broadwood ere long took his leave, having first acceded to Kate's urgent request, that he should be present to meet her friend on her arrival.

On the important day Broadwood was at his post. He sat on the hall sofa pretending to read, but really employed in watching Katy's lithe figure, as she flitted restlessly about from place to place—putting flowers here, and books there, and looking from windows, and arranging music, and trying if the piano were in tune, and now and then running up stairs *once* more, "to see if dear Leonora's room was all quite right," till her jealous young lover was half wild for thinking what he should do to inspire such devotion for himself, as he now saw bestowed on Kate's "intimate friend."

The sound of carriage wheels was heard; Kate paused a moment in an attitude of anxious expectation—then her white robes fluttered along the hall, and almost ere the new-comer had time to alight, Kate's arms were flung around her, and the two frends locked each other in a close embrace. An interminable kiss followed; and then, without releasing her friend, Kate dragged her into the house and seated her on a parlor sofa, kissing and embracing her meanwhile, till young Broadwood, beginning to feel positively uncomfortable, was about to leave the room, when Kate fortunately recovered her presence of mind sufficiently to present him.

Miss Stanley was a tall, fine-looking girl—not pretty, but graceful and pleasing, with a face expressive of more good sense than Broadwood was inclined to think her conduct would warrant. He was prejudiced against her, nor did his dislike decrease on finding himself become quite a nonentity to Katy. He had thought her indifferent enough to him before Leonora's arrival, heaven knows; but now he was utterly extinguished. Vain all his efforts to be agreeable—he found himself absolutely *nobody*, whenever the favored "intimate friend" was by.

Piqued and almost despairing, he changed his line of conduct. His attempts to win Katy's attention entirely ceased. He looked often and earnestly at Miss Stanley, and he took occasion to ask Kate "why she had never told him how very charming her friend was?"

"Never told you so?" cried Kate, surprised, "why I told you so a hundred times—till upon my word, Mr. Broadwood, I began to think you were tired of hearing it."

"But you never told me how extremely beautiful she was."

"Because," said Kate, hesitating, "I can't exactly say that I *do* think that Leonora is so *very, very* beautiful—though she is very lovely—something better than pretty."

"Not pretty? Oh, Miss Kate!" returned Broadwood, "how can you say so? She is positively beautiful."

Kate was silent.

An evening or two after this conversation, Miss Stanley was seated at the piano, singing, when young Broadwood whispered Kate—

"Never heard such a voice in my life! superb! what taste!—what feeling! I never heard any singing that pleased me so well."

Kate's face flushed, but she replied, quickly and warmly,

"I knew you would like Leonora's singing. Do pray, dear Leonora, give us something more."

Miss Stanley favored them with several more songs, and Broadwood's enthusiasm kept pace with her efforts. After a time she insisted on resigning her place at the instrument to Kate, who tremblingly did her best. Broadwood remained cold and silent, and with secret joy perceived a little pout on Kate's sweet lips as she left the piano. He saw that he had gained an advantage, and followed it up. He found whatever Leonora did perfect, and did not fail to make his opinions known to Katy.

The next day, when Leonora went to the piano, young Broadwood took a seat beside her, expressing now and then the extreme delight her performance afforded him. Suddenly she glanced up at him, and said, smiling,

"I understand—I will help you."

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"Thank you—thank you," Broadwood returned, warmly, and their compact was sealed.

Broadwood's adjutant was a most efficient one, and rendered him invaluable aid, not only by sounding his praises to Katy, but by affecting to accept and return his attentions. It was curious, and charming too, to see how jealous little Katy was become. How entirely she ceased to sound her friend's praises to Mr. Broadwood; and yet she was a good little thing, and tried hard to overcome feelings she thought unworthy. Broadwood had never loved her so well.

One charming afternoon the young ladies, with Broadwood, set out for a ride. Now Kate rode extremely well, while Miss Stanley was but an indifferent horsewoman, yet as the latter cantered on a little in advance, Broadwood exclaimed,

"Look, Miss Kate—did you ever see such riding? magnificent, by Jove! why your friend is another Di Vernon."

Kate glanced at him to see if he were in earnest, and deceived by the gravity of his face, she pouted and turned away her head, without saying a word.

"The finest riding I ever saw," Broadwood continued, maliciously—"don't you agree with me?"

Forced to reply, Kate turned her face still further from him, and answered petulantly,

"I can ride better myself."

"You?" cried Broadwood, with rather an impolite intonation of astonishment.

"Yes," responded Kate, now quite roused, and turning her eyes full upon him, "I can ride as well as Leonora, and sing as well too—and," she continued, her voice suddenly changing, "I used to think you liked my singing, and—and every thing else I did, until Leonora came—but now," her voice faltered, and her long lashes hung heavy with tears, which she struggled angrily to repress, but finding it in vain, she turned sharply to her companion, saying,

"Oh, you needn't look so pleased, Mr. Broadwood, I'm not crying for what you think I am."

Ere Mr. Broadwood had time to reply to this strange assertion, Leonora rejoined them, and the words he longed to utter, and which would have set poor little Katy's proud, fluttering heart at rest, remained unspoken.

When, after their return home, Katy came down in the parlor, after changing her habit, she found Leonora and Mr. Broadwood seated in a window corner engaged in a close conversation, and one evidently of the deepest interest; her ear caught a word or two, and growing very pale, she turned as if involuntarily to leave the room. Broadwood looking up at the moment was struck by the alteration in her appearance, which he had not before observed. She seemed thinner, taller, and much sadder than he had ever seen her; her beautiful blue eyes were heavy with languor; her face was very pale, and about her mouth hung a certain expression which seemed to tell of secret, lonely weepings. Broadwood's heart smote him; the poor child had been really suffering, and he had been treating her with such cruel levity. He rose to prevent her leaving the room, and begged her to come with him into the garden to see a very beautiful rose which he wanted to show her. Kate assented passively, and accompanied him in silence along the winding garden path, till at last when they had almost reached the boundaries of the garden, Kate asked her absent companion in some surprise, "where his rose was?"

Mr. Broadwood paused, and, taking her hand, looked earnestly into her face—"Katy! Katy!"

Kate turned her head aside one moment, and then calmly asked,

"Well?"

"There is something I wish to talk with you about, Kate——"

"I can guess what it is," said Kate, in a low, hurried voice—"about what you have just been saying to Leonora—I overheard—a few words."

"Yes, Kate, I was telling her of my love—my hopes, and she has encouraged me to think I have not loved in vain——"

"Yes, yes," gasped Kate—"I understand—you need not tell me any more," she made an attempt to fly back to the house, but Broadwood detained her.

"Don't—don't hold me now," cried the agitated girl—"another time I will congratulate you."

"Congratulate? Kate, darling, what do you mean? You do not—you cannot fancy I love any one but yourself—surely you have not been seriously deceived by the part I have been acting—surely you must have felt that I was yours, heart and soul, all the while—Kate, love—speak to me," he continued, for Kate's form hung almost lifeless on his arm, her sweet head sinking on her bosom, as though a sudden faintness overpowered her, yet a smile of heavenly joy played round her pale lips.

Broadwood drew her tenderly to him, begging her to look up, and give him but one word—but when Kate recovered herself it was to draw back, saying in a faint, faltering voice,

"I thought you loved Leonora."

"By heaven, no, Kate, never," replied Broadwood, energetically—but Kate was not satisfied.

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"Surely she has cause to think so—surely she loves you. She is my friend—my dear friend," continued Kate, recovering all her spirit, "I will never break her heart—better—yes, better my own," she added, with a dignity which rose above disguise.

"But my own, best love, Leonora does not care a pin for me," cried young Broadwood, much touched; "trust me, dear Kate, Leonora will convince you of that. The fact is, I was afraid without some manœuvre I should never win you; and we two have been in a league against you—I can't exactly explain it—but Miss Leonora will tell you about it, and make it all right."

"Yes, that she will," said a cheerful voice near them, and turning they saw Leonora approaching, accompanied by a tall, fine-looking man, on whose arm she was leaning—"and as the first step thereto," she continued, blushing, "let me introduce to you, Kate, my friend, Mr. ——, who has somewhat unexpectedly favored me with a visit."

While young Broadwood was shaking hands with the new-comer, he overheard Leonora slyly whisper to Kate—

"Shall I be your bride's-maid, Katy dear? or will you be mine? or shall we be married on the same day?"

Kate blushing, bewildered, and happy, threw her arms round Leonora's neck, and a fervent kiss marked the renewal of their *friendship*, but not their *intimacy*.

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THE LITTLE STEP-DAUGHTER.
BY A. T. KRYDER.
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THE LITTLE STEP-DAUGHTER.

BY A. T. KRYDER.

"THERE, take that for your pains, and mind better the next time," angrily exclaimed Allie's step-mother, as she came up to the trembling girl, and gave her a blow on the ear when she found the coffee, that the little girl had been told to brown, had a shade too dark a color; "take that," repeating the blow; "and the next time you'll hear of the broomstick." Allie passed out at the kitchen door, and crept around to the sunny side of the barn; and, sinking on the ground, burst into a flood of tears and wept; long and bitterly she wept!

It was early March; the wind whistled cheerlessly by; heavy and sombre clouds, seemingly laden brimful of rain, and sleet, and snow, flitted frequently across the sun's broad disc; while the booming river, swollen with melted snow and drifting ice, spoke a language that sounded despairingly to the desolate soul of the more than orphan child.

The little girl's clothing, torn and tattered, corresponded illy with the severity of the weather. An old woollen dress, reaching but little below the knees, patched and repatched, with sleeves made of new and uncouth material; shoes that were full of holes; and a faded pink bonnet, that her mother—sainted being! of whom she had no remembrance, save those of love and kindness—had made for her long years before, constituted her sole outer clothing.

She wept! Alas! why should she not weep? What else could she do? As one by one the silken folds of memory began to unwrap, and bright, brief, blessed visions of her early childhood home, of her mother's love, and a sister's care and tenderness came careering as on angels wings before her mind's eye; what else could her young heart do? what other relief had *it?* it the heart that should be warmed by a mother's love, and cherished by a mother's counsel; it that meets with nothing but scorn, and contumely, and blows—shut out from the common meed of sympathy and love—all that makes life glorious?

The cold, merciless winds swept around her, and fearful shudderings came over her, as the trickling tears froze fast to the thin sleeves of her dress.

She is aroused by her step-mother's voice, calling, "Allie, Allie, my dear, come in quickly," recognizing at once in that tone of mocking kindness that there are visitors within. Mechanically rising she obeys the summons, and enters the house. She who arrogates to herself a mother's place, in her falseness of heart and obsequiousness of tongue, encumbers her auditors with twenty excuses for the girl's flight, and continues as if in astonishment, "why, dear me, Allie, you been down to the river playing in the water; only see how wet your sleeve is. You should be very careful, and remember, as I've told you, to keep out of the water, you might catch your death of cold," and she paused out of breath.

"And besides, my little dear," chimed in a dignified lady in black, with gold spectacles, "its dangerous about falling in."

"Certainly, my dear, you should remember," says her father, for an instant looking up from the book he was intently perusing, but in the earnestness of his abstraction he forgot to finish the sentence so happily begun. Though there may have been another cause, for it was always so of late—while "certainly" was echoed and re-echoed from mouth to mouth around the room.

Naturally timid, no wonder Allie shrunk into a corner overwhelmed with reproof. This afforded her step-mother another opportunity, which she was not slow in improving, for another threatening and reproof, and which ended with a command "to waken Willie. I'm so afraid the dear little angel will oversleep himself; besides I don't think so much sleep is good for children, do you, Mrs. Moncroft?"

"Oh, no," immediately replies that lady, and again another echo runs around the room.

And what with attending to Willie and bringing wood and water, and doing a score more things at once, tea-time brought a misfortune worse than all to the weary girl. This was a request from the stately and dignified lady in black, with the gold spectacles, for the little girl to bring her work-bag from off the window. She obeyed, taking Willie along, who, making a grab, snatches it from her, and flinging his arm around with such violence that the snuff-box flies out on the floor, scattering the contents far and wide.

And though Allie's heart seems ready to break, yet it but furnishes occasion for another boxing, with a warning to be more careful in future.

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And throughout that long evening—and doubly long did it seem to the sick girl, for the fierce fever flashes were already wasting her strength—it was nought but toil, toil; tramp, tramp, to the weary one, sick in body and sorrowing of soul. *Pining for what?* Not for gaudy finery, not alone for a lost mother, but for that love and sympathy that should flow from soul to soul, as free and shoreless as the waves of mid-ocean?

Not until the visitors were gone was Allie allowed any supper, but she loathed the sight, and said she felt unwell.

"So you're sick, you hussy you, after playing in the water all the afternoon. I guess you may go to bed, its no use sending for a doctor, I never heard of them doing children any good."

Allie crept up into the garret on her pallet of straw, and was soon locked in the embraces of the friend of those who sorrow without crime. But her sleep was broken by fitful startings, and once she awoke murmuring, "mother! dear mother!"

"The husband's tears may be few and brief,
He may woo and win another,
But the daughter clings, with undying grief,
To the image of her mother!"

And though others may forget; and suns rise and set in beauty; and moons silver leaf and tree, cloud and fountain, earth and ocean with a glorious sheen; and though scenes of pleasure may charm all other's grief away; yet nothing shall banish that mother's image from her daughter's heart, the last look of love, the last tone of that hallowed voice, now mingling with the angels far away.

With the morning light Allie, as usual, was first summoned to make the fire and sweep the room, though scarcely able to support herself on her tottering limbs. But no matter for that. It did not concern the heartless step-mother in the least. No, not her! What were the sick child's complainings to her? Nothing. Though a pious and sanctimonious woman, an alms giver, and deeply interested in the conversion of the heathen:—yet the idea that her own step-child had any right to complain, though steeped in the veriest depths of misery and wretchedness, want and woe, pain and sickness, never once entered her thoughts.

Before the sunset shadows fell athwart the plain, the little girl was prostrated on a sick bed never to rise again. Throughout all that long night of pain, Allie lay moaning and in great misery.

But no loving eye kept watch around that lonely couch; no gentle hand ministered to her wants; no soft voice spoke words of soothing, of comfort to the stricken one; and why? Young and confiding, what great crime had she committed, that thus alone this gentle and loving creature, a being whose affection, had it been requited, would have flown in a blissful channel down the middle stream of time—that thus alone and unattended she should die? She had no mother! Oh, frightful crime! She was an orphan in *a world that knows no higher guilt than that of being poor!*

Yet there shall come a day when we shall learn, with marvel and awe, that some of heaven's chiefest martyrs and saints were not holier than they.

Toward morning she sank into a lethargic slumber never to waken more. The sunlight came, and with it the usual "Allie, get up," but the avenues of hearing were forever locked up; and the sunbeams fell upon an eye of beauty that was forever closed—in death!

She, though on earth weak, who

"———bathing there in streams of Heavenly light,
Found strength to gaze upon the infinite."

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THE OPERA BOX.: I.
BY CARRY STANLEY.
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THE OPERA BOX.

BY CARRY STANLEY.

I.

"STUART! what a magnificent piece of woodland this is! Indeed it is a magnificent country you have altogether! If there was much probability of my remaining the poor devil I am, on five hundred pounds a year, instead of being the next heir of my old bachelor cousin, who loves me about as well as rich old bachelors generally love their next heirs, where there is a title and splendid fortune, I think I should be tempted to patronize republicanism, and become one of the 'sovereigns' of America. But Dunraven Castle and an earldom is too great a temptation—I don't think I can give them up," and Arthur Delange, as he finished speaking, energetically cut off a cluster of oak leaves with the small switch which he carried in his hand.

The two young men sauntered slowly along the grass-grown road which wound its way beneath the arching boughs of the fine old trees, gleams of golden sunlight breaking through the branches here and there, whilst birds sung above them, and squirrels and rabbits fearlessly crossed their path, glancing askance at them with their bright black eyes; and the perfume of the sweet fern and hickory leaves came pleasantly on the morning air.

"Come, curmudgeon! hurry yourself, those birds have to be cooked for our meal yet," said Delange, to an urchin of ten years, who was following them with a bag of game.

"My name ain't curmudgeon, it's Johnny Watson," replied the boy, sullenly, not quickening his pace a whit.

"Take care how you insult 'one of the sovereigns' at large," said Harry Stuart, laughingly; "but who in the name of Venus is this?"

At this moment, emerging from one of the many green alleys which threaded the woods, appeared a lady on horseback, rapidly approaching them. A long, white plume floated over her shoulder, whilst the motion of rider, horse and feather seemed to be one, so graceful and even was it, as she steadily rose and fell in the saddle, whilst with arched neck, glistening eye, and extended feet the horse passed on in a long, even trot.

"She trots splendidly *a la jockey*, by all that's great, and would beat a 'bold dragoon' in the saddle," said Delange, enthusiastically, as the gentlemen stepped on one side, and stood with heads uncovered till the rider had passed. "Whew! our future President knows her, that's fortunate," continued he, as he saw her halt for a moment by the boy, then pass on again at the same pace as before.

"Pray, Mr. Johnny Watson, can you tell us that lady's name?" said Delange, to the lad who had now approached them.

The child gave a quick, shrewd glance at the speaker, and detecting in his face some anxiety to have his question favorably answered, replied,

"I don't exactly know it."

"But I thought she spoke to you," said Stuart.

"Yes, sir, she comes to see my mother sometimes, sir," answered Johnny, more courteously to Harry, for he had taken a dislike to "the furrin man, with hair, that was always a poking fun at him," as he termed Delange.

"Well, Johnny, do you know her father's name?" again queried Harry.

"Yes, sir, he is Squire Rivers, up in that big house on the hill. He's proper rich."

"Why, you young scamp, I thought you said you didn't know her name," said Delange.

"Neither I didn't know it exactly—it's Miss Emma, or Miss Ellen, or Miss Edith, or some such high flown name," replied the boy, doggedly.

"Well, Johnny, you'll do! What a diplomatist you will make. I hope I'll live to see you Ambassador, or Minister, or whatever you call it in this country," answered Delange, laughingly.

Game seemed to become quite necessary to Arthur Delange's existence, for day after day he took a short cut through the woods to the places where birds were to be found, sometimes alone, and sometimes accompanied by Stuart; and morning after morning he met Edith Rivers cantering, or trotting along with the same breezy motion. Sometimes she would be humming snatches of a gay tune, sometimes patting her horse's neck, and caressing him in low words; but always, as Delange declared, the most bewitchingly beautiful woman he ever saw.

"Are the birds all killed, Arthur, or didn't you see Miss Rivers yesterday morning, that you are moping about at this time of day?" asked Stuart.

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"I haven't seen Miss Rivers these two days, and I'm tired of gunning," answered Delange.

"Because you *haven't* seen Miss Rivers, I suppose," said Harry, laughingly. "Well, there's not much to interest us up here, anyhow; and as our little tavern don't rival 'the Irving,' suppose we put off. Let's go out though, and knock down a partridge or two for the first time, before the sun gets too high."

They had not gone far, when a bird rose. A shot from Delange brought it down immediately. Just then he heard a female voice say sharply,

"Steady, Selim! for shame, sir," and looking behind him he saw Miss Rivers, whose horse was plunging fearfully, with distended nostrils, ears erect and quivering limbs; whilst through it all she unconcernedly kept her seat, with a firmness wonderful even in so practised a horsewoman.

To Delange's astonishment, she was accompanied by a gentleman, who quietly looked on without an offer of assistance, so he quickly sprang to her horse's head and was about to take hold of the bridle, when the lady said,

"Please, do not touch him, sir, I prefer managing him myself," and with a few coaxing words and caresses, she soon brought him under control.

"My gun must have frightened him; I ask your pardon, madam, but I did not known there was any one in the field, but my friend and myself."

"There was no danger to be apprehended: he was only a little gay from not having been used for a few days," was the reply; and Delange inwardly pronounced the smile with which she finished the sentence the most fascinating one he had ever seen.

"My daughter is accustomed to taking care of herself. I never interfere with her rights over Selim," said the gentleman who accompanied Miss Rivers.

The two sportsmen walked beside the equestrians, for some distance, and when they parted it was with the promise to meet that afternoon at Mr. Rivers' house.

Two weeks passed, and Arthur Delange had become as fond of gunning as ever. His afternoons were usually passed in riding over the hills or through the woods by the side of Edith Rivers, and the evening always found him by her work-table, or piano.

Stuart in the meanwhile grumbled somewhat, as he complained that Arthur had appropriated the lady so unceremoniously, that he felt quite *de trop;* and threatened to leave his friend among the hills, if he did not decide upon shortening his visit.

"Propose to her, for mercy's sake, and let's be off; these abominable fogs will give a fellow the bronchitis, if you don't get away."

"I'm as poor as a rat, or else I would, even at the risk of being rejected on so short an acquaintance. By George, but she's a splendid girl; she's not had all her nature rubbed off her in a ball-room. I never seen so much originality with such polished manners."

"No, I expect not," replied Stuart, dryly, "but I wonder whether that slip of aristocracy, Lady Flora Millwood, has not something to do with your hesitancy. I remember when I was in England that you were her most devoted cavalier. I do not think you will gain much renown, by trying to conquer the hearts of our American ladies."

Arthur Delange's eyes flashed for a moment, but he replied calmly,

"You are mistaken, Stuart. I should never hesitate a moment between Edith Rivers and Lady Flora, I value myself too highly to think that a marriage out of the circle of London exclusive, could disgrace me; but the old earl may hold on these twenty years, and twenty-five hundred dollars does not much more than keep me in gloves and percussion caps."

Two days of drenching rain confined the gentlemen to the parlor of the little inn; and on the third, when they went to call on Miss Rivers, the servant informed them that she with her father had been suddenly summoned to the city, by the illness of a near relative.

II.

THERE is nothing like having to pass a day or so on board a dirty little Mediterranean steamer to create sociability. As for Lady Clendenning, her pretty Grecian profile was perfectly distorted with yawning. "Robert," said she, suddenly to her husband, after gazing around listless and *ennuied,* "do you know who that splendid girl is over there? She must have come on board at Genoa, as I have not noticed her before; do have compassion on me, and find out!"

Lord Clendenning bowed to his wife, and said it would afford him great pleasure to be acquainted with the lady, so he would go immediately and ask her name, and with much gravity he started off. In a few moments he returned and informed her impatient ladyship that the fair creature was an American lady of the name of Rivers, travelling with her father. Lady Clendenning puzzled her pretty head for a long while, to find an excuse for addressing one who had so much interested her, heartily wishing she would grow sea-sick, if it would only open a door for an introduction; but Miss Rivers sat gazing on the receding shore

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with unmoved muscles, and not an increased shade of pallor over the richness of her complexion.

But Fate sometimes quietly steps in and does more for us than our own well-laid plans would accomplish in a month; and so thought Lady Clendenning, as she saw her little daughter of about four years old escape from the nurse's arms, and in running across the floor fell just before Miss Rivers.

Lady Clendenning knew perfectly well that her child was not hurt, but seeing the lady pick it up, she arose with all the semblance of motherly alarm and flew toward her. Miss Rivers was of course properly thanked, little Cora smothered with kisses, and her mother soon established in the full tide of conversation with the beautiful American.

What letters of introduction little children are to be sure.

The acquaintance thus formed soon ripened into intimacy. Lady Clendenning, who was enthusiastic in everything, was told by her husband that she fairly raved about Miss Rivers. They parted and met, and parted and met again at various places on the Continent; and when at last the Clendennings bid them adieu at Venice to proceed home, it was with the promise that when their tour was over, Edith and her father should visit them in England.

III.

"Now Edith, *ma chere*, look your very best to-night in order to do credit to my taste. Really you are so passably good-looking, that you will be as great a *lionne* as Van Amburgh's," said Lady Clendenning, entering Miss Rivers' dressing-room, as she was putting the finishing stroke to her toilet for the Opera. "Dear me," continued her flighty ladyship, "your taste does more for you than all Paris full of *femme de chambres* would do. Why, there's my French maid, Florette, who would have been half an hour arranging that spray of flowers as gracefully over your *bandeaux*, as you have done it in half a minute. If you have made yourself beautiful to your heart's content we will go; but my dear creature, pray don't fall into the vulgar mistake of thinking that you go to the Opera to listen to the singing; I suppose you do such antiquated things in America, but we only go here to show a last new necklace, or carry on a forbidden flirtation behind the curtains of our boxes."

Lady Clendenning vastly enjoyed the sensation which her beautiful *protegee* created, as soon as she made her appearance in her Opera box. She was chatting away and flirting her fan with all the graceful coquetry of a Spanish woman, when she suddenly reached over and whispered,

"Edith, look, quick! do you see those three gentlemen standing in the parquette, far back, conversing together?"

Edith followed the direction of her ladyship's eyes and gave a start; a sudden flush mounted over neck and brow, and her breath came more quickly as she thought she recognized as one of the group, Arthur Delange.

"Well," continued Lady Clendenning, "that handsome one is my cousin, the Earl of Dunraven, one of the greatest catches in England. He's somewhat Quixotic, to be sure, and goes tilting against all the windmills of society, but *n'importe;* he has an old title and a splendid fortune, and he's just as much courted as if he was like anybody else."

Edith had scarcely attended to what her friend had been saying. Her eyes were riveted on the gentleman whom she was every moment becoming more and more assured was Arthur Delange; and with a half smile parting her red lips, she could not but wonder at the infatuation of her ladyship in calling the Earl of Dunraven handsome, when he was by. A something, she knew not what, prevented her mentioning having known one of the trio before; but it must be confessed that it was with a glad flutter of the heart, that she hoped to meet him again.

At this moment Lady Clendenning turned around, and nodded carelessly to a couple of ladies, who had just entered her box.

"That's Lady Margaret Talbot, and the one just behind you is her sister, Lady Flora Millwood," whispered she, as the persons under discussion were divesting themselves of their Opera cloaks. "Lady Margaret married a man old enough to be her father, who spends his time in the sentimental occupation of eating, drinking, and being merry over a gouty limb; and as for Lady Flora, she's determined to be Countess of Dunraven; though before my cousin came to his title, she was careful how she threw out the bait, hoping for a better bite, as there was a probability of twenty years between her and the coronet. She's always glad to make use of my box, knowing that Dunraven's fond of me in a cousinly way, and there is a chance of meeting him here."

An introduction now took place to the ladies behind her; and when Edith again turned toward the audience, it was to find herself intently watched by the trio to which Lady Clendenning had called her attention. She looked away; and when again, after a few moments conversation with Lady Flora, her eyes were drawn to the

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same place by a kind of fascination, she was sure that she recognized Arthur Delange, and that he half bowed, as if he feared he might be mistaken. The curtain now rose, and she turned her head resolutely toward the stage; but the music occupied her attention much less than she had thought it would. At the end of the first scene she involuntarily looked toward the *parquette* again, to again find the same pair of luminous black eyes watching her.

"Edith," exclaimed Lady Clendenning, "I really believe Dunraven is smitten at last, he has scarcely taken his eyes off you during the whole of that scene. What a good joke it would be, if you were to become Countess of Dunraven! Why, Lady Flora is so near a statue now, that she would turn into a petrifaction without any trouble, with amazement. She would as soon think he would marry a Camanche squaw. You shall have him though, in spite of her! what a funny idea!" and her ladyship laughed gleefully, and her busy brain was already at work to out manœuvre Lady Flora.

"I am very much obliged to you, but I have no ambition to wear a coronet, Lady Clendenning," replied Edith, "so pray don't give yourself any trouble on my account. Keep all your faculties in reserve for that little puss, Cora, she'll need them some day. There is not a title in England that would tempt me, I would not sell myself for so cheap a thing."

"You really look superb when you blaze out in that way," smiled Lady Clendenning. "If Dunraven was only here, I have no doubt that he would insist on taking you at once from the Opera to the altar at St. George's, Hanover Square, provided it was only the canonial hour."

Edith smiled, and again turned her eyes toward the parquette, but Arthur Delange was no longer visible. Just then Lady Flora, who, with her sister, had been conversing with some gentlemen behind them during the whole scene, exclaimed,

"You naughty man! come render an account of yourself, it's been an age since I saw you; where have you been?"

"In tortures, ever since I last laid eyes upon your beautiful ladyship," was the reply; "but excuse me for passing you, I must speak to that lady in the front of the box, as I'm sure she is an old acquaintance."

At the well known voice Edith looked around, and blushed as she held out her hand, exclaiming, "Mr. Delange."

"Mr. Delange, indeed," said Lady Clendenning, and her fan, which was always in motion when she carried it, stopped in sheer astonishment, "Mr. Delange, indeed; and pray, if I may be so curious, why did you not say you knew Arthur when I was talking of him?" and she eyed Edith keenly.

"Why I have not heard you mention him to-night! your whole conversation has been of your cousin, the Earl of Dunraven."

A pleased smile beamed upon her from the dark eyes of the gentleman, and Lady Clendenning laughed gaily, as she said,

"What a pity, Arthur, that you are Earl of Dunraven. Edith has been here casting titles and coronets aside to-night with the most superb disdain. In fact she can't bear anybody above an Honorable."

"I never knew your cousin, except as Mr. Delange, and was totally unaware that he even had an 'Honorable' appended to his name," replied Edith.

Lady Flora Millwood looked on in surprise, and wonderingly asked the officer behind her, "where the earl had become acquainted with that girl from the backwoods, whom that eccentric Lady Clendenning had introduced into society?"

"I don't know," was the reply, "but this afternoon when he caught a glimpse of her in the Park; and he left me *sans ceremonie*, and galloped after her as if he had been the wild huntsman."

Dunraven took a seat slightly behind Miss Rivers, shaded by the curtain, and what with snatches of conversation now and then, and a tumult of happy feeling, Edith heard but little of the singing.

"Progressing wonderfully well!" whispered Lady Clendenning in her ear, "I find your rusticity wears off rapidly. Didn't I tell you that fashionable women only come to the Opera to show a new necklace, or flirt behind the curtains?"

IV.

It was seemingly a gay party that met at the breakfast-table, that bright September morning at Beechwood Park, one of Lord Clendenning's country-seats. Lady Clendenning, in her character of hostess, fluttered the pretty peach-blossom colored ribbons of her breakfast-cap gaily over the coffee-cups. Lady Flora did the statuesque and aristocratic at the Earl of Dunraven, who sat and absently played with his teaspoon; Miss Rivers chatted gaily between her father and the Marquis of Hampton, whilst the other guests were arranging the day's shooting, riding, or driving.

We say a seemingly gay breakfast, for Lady Clendenning was puzzled as to the next move she should make with regard to her cousin and

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friend; and Lady Flora saw with alarm that the coronet and fine acres of Dunraven Castle were slipping away from her; and the possessor of that title was watching with painful anxiety the game which he thought was being played by Edith; whilst she sat with smiles on her face, and gay repartees on her lips, and she felt sick at heart, to think that the future wife of Arthur Delange, must be taken from the titled beauties of England. As for the rest of the company, most of them were playing at cross purposes too. Some of the gentlemen of the shooting party would fain have staid at home and had a quiet game of billiards, with a lady who perhaps was to be driven out by an exulting rival; there was a lady or two of the riding party, perhaps, who would gladly have given up the exhilirating canter of the saddle horse for a seat in the landeau, or phæton of an heir expectant; and there was a superannuated old lord or so, who was inwardly anathematizing the man who had drawn them into a party for the Abbey, as the damp grass did not agree with them.

"Miss Rivers, will you honor us by taking a seat in my barouche with Lady Clendenning?" asked the old Marquis of Hampton.

Edith assented, and Lady Clendenning cast a triumphant glance at Dunraven. A look of contempt passed over the young earl's face, as he arose from the table and sauntered to the breakfast-room window. Presently he turned and said, "Lady Flora, what do you say to a saddle horse instead of the carriage to the Abbey, it's a fine day?"

Her ladyship gladly availed herself on an invitation, which now came so seldom, and thus the party was made up.

"Really," said Lady Flora to her companion, as they were cantering down one of the broad gravel roads of the Park, slightly behind the rest of the party, "the manœuvring with which that Miss Rivers endeavors to secure the old dotard, the Marquis of Hampton, is disgusting."

"I do not see that Miss Rivers is manœuvring, and even if she was, it would be no more disgusting than that of any other lady," was the reply.

Lady Flora was silent for a moment, for the earl's unintended sarcasm went home.

"Except," replied her ladyship, after a short time, "that he is an imbecile, dissipated old man, whom no one else would marry but herself, and there can be no attraction to her but his title."

"I do not think England so destitute of ambitious women, that he could not find a wife in his own circle if he wanted one," said her companion; but his brow became more moody as he rode along, and Lady Flora, upon whom a new hope had dawned, when invited by him to ride, again began to despair of ever being the Countess of Dunraven.

The visit to the ruined Abbey passed as such visits usually do. The same amount of champagne, sandwiches and *pats* had been consumed, as is customary, and the party had returned to Beechwood Park, some with more heart-burnings than when they set out, and some with life looking all *coleur de rose*.

Lady Clendenning hurried through her toilet, and descended to the drawing-room before the party had assembled for dinner, and, as she expected, found her cousin already there. She took his arm, and commenced carelessly promenading up and down, and, at last, as if accidentally, but in reality so as not to be overheard, she drew him to a window, where they were shielded from observation by the heavy curtains.

"Indeed," said her ladyship, in continuation of their conversation, "it was a terribly stupid ride to me. The marquis was so devoted to Edith, that I felt myself quite *de trop*, and she was so fluttered, that I believe she really forgot I was in existence. I was glad enough to make my escape, when we reached the Abbey; and as his lordship offered her his arm when they alighted, and walked away with her in another direction, I have no doubt it was to make her an offer of his hand, and the place where his heart ought to be."

Her cousin bit his under lip but said nothing.

"Of course she would accept him. She could not fail being dazzled by such a brilliant rank as his," continued Lady Clendenning.

"If she should think of marrying him for a moment, I should consider her irretrievably degraded. He is an old dissipated *roue*, that a Circassian slave would not sell herself to, though there are plenty of English women who would," said the earl, impetuously.

Lady Clendenning stood in consternation. She had "reckoned without her host" entirely. The old Marquis of Hampton, who had stopped at Beechwood Park, for a few days on his way to a friend's, she had persuaded to remain, in order that with his title she might arouse her cousin's jealousy, and she had been tossing Edith about like a shuttle-cock between them; and "here was Dunraven on his high horse tilting at the windmills," as she secretly denominated it, whilst from the bottom of her heart she did not believe Edith Rivers had ever given the Marquis of Hampton a thought. She had intended to out manœuvre Lady Flora Millwood, and now she had out manœuvred herself. In her perplexity

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she stood clasping and unclasping the bracelets on her arm, inwardly determining to use more skilful generalship in future.

Edith Rivers entered the drawing-room of Beechwood Park, that day just before dinner was announced, more radiantly beautiful than ever. The plainness of her pure white dress, was only relieved by the bows of broad, rich plaid ribbon which ornamented it; whilst her abundance of glossy brown hair was confined at the back with a net-work of gold, which allowed a soft, long ringlet to escape here and there on her neck, or about her ears. There was a flush on her face which Arthur construed into one of triumph, and her bearing was, if possible, more queenly than before. "She'll wear her title well," thought the young man; "and her higher rank, as marchioness, will certainly give her precedence of my Countess of Dunraven."

The party were about separating for the night, when the earl went up to Edith, and holding out his hand, said, "I must bid you adieu, as I shall not see you in the morning. I am unexpectedly obliged to go to Dunraven Castle; but remember that I have a promise of a visit from you and your father with the Clendennings. Emily says that perhaps they will be with me next week. Our party will not be a large one, but the quality will, perhaps, make up for the quantity. The Marquis of Hampton has promised to honor me."

Edith looked up, and imagined there was a half bitter tone in what Dunraven had been saying, but her thoughts were too much pre-occupied to let it dwell long on her mind.

V.

Lady Clendenning's carriage was winding slowly up the long oak avenue to Dunraven Castle, and her ladyship had been silent for quite half an hour. Edith Rivers looked up from a reverie, herself, and asked her if she had taken the vow of La Trappe.

"No," said Lady Clendenning. "But, Edith, are you going to marry the Marquis of Hampton?"

"Of course not," was the decided answer.

Lady Clendenning's face here brightened considerably, when she again asked,

"But he proposed, didn't he?"

"Yes," was the quiet reply.

Her ladyship's clouded brow now became perfectly radiant. Ever since her conversation with her cousin, on the day of the visit to the Abbey, she had been waiting for some intimation from Edith of the marquis' proposal, but her delicacy had forbidden her asking the question directly. But now she was becoming desperate. She must, if possible, undo all the mischief she had already done by her manœuvring, and it was only by a grand *coup d'etat* this could be effected, she alighted at the great hall door in the highest spirits.

"Mr. Rivers and Robert will be along in time for dinner," said she, to her cousin, on entering the drawing-room after changing her dress; "but who's your party, Arthur, except those I see here?"

Lady Flora and her sister, with some dozen others, were named; "but the Marquis of Hampton has not yet arrived. I am sorry on Miss Rivers' account," said the earl.

"It's on Miss Rivers' account that he's not here, I suspect," replied Lady Clendenning, "Edith has refused him," and, giving a sly glance at Arthur, she arose and crossed the room.

To Lady Flora's infinite disgust, the Earl of Dunraven passed by the titled dames of the party, and handed Edith Rivers out to dinner; and she watched with jealous eyes the magnificent hot-house bouquets, which were sent to her dressing-room every day. Arthur resumed his place now by Edith's side as familiarly as he had done in the days of gunning memory, was always by to hand her to the saddle, turn over the leaves of the music-book, or pick up her crochet-needle; but in spite of all Lady Clendenning's manœuvring he never was with her alone.

The riding, driving, boating and fishing parties for the day had been made up. It was too pleasant for any one to remain in the house; but Mr. Rivers had received letters from America, which he wished his daughter to answer immediately, as he was going with Lord Clendenning to look at a model farm in the neighborhood. Edith with inward regret gave up the delightful gallop through the park, which she was to have had with the earl and some others, and slowly betook herself to the library. She looked out sadly at the bright sunshine, and tried not to hear the grating of carriage wheels on the gravel, nor the pawing of horses' hoofs, and the gay voices of the equestrians.

Lady Flora Millwood was handed to her saddle, and the party all mounted except Dunraven, who turning to the groom that held his horse, told him to lead it away, and asked to be excused, as he had some business to attend to that morning.

Edith had been unable to resist the temptation of going to the window, to see the gay cavalcade wind down the hill, and was vainly endeavoring to recognize one figure by the side of Lady Flora, when the library door opened. Supposing it to

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be a servant, she did not turn till she heard a step close to her, and some one say,

"Are your letters finished already, Miss Rivers?"

"No, but the day was so fine, and the scenery here is so beautiful, that I could not stay from the window. I think I shall draw my table up and write here. But I thought you were of the riding-party."

"No," answered the earl, "I am very proud of my place, and wanted to take you to the spot we proposed visiting this morning, so I thought I would defer it till you could be along."

There was something in his manner that embarrassed Edith, and she nervously replied, "you *have* a beautiful place, I never saw a finer one."

"Will you be its mistress, Edith?" was the query, in a low voice, and Arthur took her hand, which, as it was not withdrawn, he had the assurance to pass around her waist; and somehow, at the end of two hours, when the party returned for luncheon, Edith's letters had not been commenced, and Dunraven had attended to no business, except that which did not require the assistance of his steward.

Lady Clendenning was in raptures, taking care to inform Lady Flora Millwood, the next day, as she was following Edith to the carriage, on their return to Beechwood Park, that Lord Clendenning and herself should not spend their Christmas as usual at Hollywell, for it was a favorite of Arthur's, and she had promised it to him and Edith to pass their honeymoon at.

"I am so glad she refused that old Marquis of Hampton," said she, giving a delighted glance at Lady Flora's disappointed face.

Her ladyship's busy brain is manœuvring still to find something unique as a court dress for Edith, when she shall be presented to her most gracious majesty as Countess of Dunraven, which shall surpass that of the *ci-devant* Lady Flora Millwood, who at the same drawing-room will appear as the Marchioness of Hampton.

"No matter if she does step out before you to dinner in consequence of her rank," says Lady Clendenning, "every leaf on the estate is mortgaged; and as to that court dress, my dear, you shall surpass her as far as Cinderella did her sisters after being arrayed by the fairy."

"Take care, Edith," says the earl, laughingly, "or Emily will ruin your dress, as she nearly did your happiness—by manœuvring."

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MY FIRST LOVE.
BY ELLA RODMAN.
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MY FIRST LOVE.

BY ELLA RODMAN.

"Ah, me! for aught that ever I could read,
Could ever hear by tales or history,
The course of true love never did run smooth?"

From amid the chaos of my youthful days arises the image of my first love! But stop—this is not the proper way of expressing it; even words, like dress, should be suited to the person for whom they are intended, and such a manner of introducing the subject would rather call up the idea of some majestic water-spirit, a thing half fearful, half divine—or some poet face that was "all my fancy painted it"—instead of the awkward, ill-contrived figure of a genuine Yankee boy, whose limbs seemed to have been thrown together at random, and who, beyond a certain good-natured expression, had certainly nothing in his countenance to recommend it.

I should rather say *straddles* the image of my first love—for to that species of locomotion was John Bancombe particularly inclined. He was one of that sort who, among men and boys, with a blackboard, geometrical puzzles, or sufficient provocation for a regular battle, are *men;* but in the drawing-room, under the stiffening discipline of their "Sunday best," and an idea that something rather soft and accommodating is expected of them, are perfect fools.

John was extremely bashful, and had a great trick of blushing, which, I think, first led me to notice him. He was about six feet high, although not more than seventeen, with light hair, and the sort of face which is usually termed "sheepish." Now-a-days, whenever I call to mind John Bancombe and all the love that I wasted upon him—which, had it lasted, he would have been entirely unable to appreciate—I am disposed to laugh and ask myself what, in the name of common sense, ever bewitched me.

And yet, when I came to think of it, it does not appear so very surprising. His was precisely the character to take with an imaginative person. Brought up by thrifty parents, who understood well the art of making a little go a great way, he had acquired the habit of being close and prudent in everything; and as he wasted very few words, I was puzzled to know what he really was. There was a blank to be filled up; and John Bancombe stood before me noble, intellectual, and possessed of every talent and virtue. That he would make a brilliant figure in the annals of his country I was firmly persuaded; when I read the speeches of Clay, Calhoun, and Webster, I thought to myself, "you repose now in fancied security, but wait a few years;" and I looked forward to the time when, led by John Bancombe, I should proudly assume the seat of Mrs. President.

He is now a country schoolmaster, and "boards around!"

I could not say much for John's appearance, to be sure; but then who wanted a handsome man to be always looking at himself instead of me? His name, too, might have been better selected; but as he had a brother Peleg, and a sister Consternation, he had certainly fared the best. His father boasted of having called the children whatever happened to come handy; though I always thought that he must have taken considerable pains to fish up the cognomen of his two eldest born—"*Christian* names" they cannot be termed.

My admiration for John did not include all the members of his family; but as Peleg was married to a "nice, steady young woman," and Consternation had a "likely young man" who came to see her every Sunday night, I thought that they would not give us much trouble.

The business of the farm afforded John sufficient employment during the summer season; for as the acquirement of knowledge was considered by his thrifty parents in the light of knitting—a something to be taken up at odd times, when there was nothing else to do—it was not until "killing-time" was well over, and the winter hay stored in the barns, that Mrs. Bancombe and Consternation took seriously in hand the business of looking over John's wardrobe preparatory to his winter start.

He lodged with a respectable widow, a relation of his father's, who had an invalid daughter by no means prepossessing in appearance, or agreeable in manner—and yet what a sweet creature Susannah Furwood was considered by us girls! How many kind inquiries about her health were instituted! how many delicacies carried in person!

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Which deeds of mercy were sometimes rewarded by a glimpse of John Bancombe, as he bashfully made his escape through a back window—his retreat being effected with more of haste than graceful ease.

There was a report that John's board was taken out in potatoes and other "sass," and such would seem to be the case; for regularly every Friday evening, if there was snow on the ground, an old sleigh made its appearance, which, after being unloaded of sundry baskets and parcels, would stop a while to rest, and then drag off John to the bosom of his family. That old painted sleigh! with its wreath of faded roses on a yellow ground, of which I knew from long study, the position of every leaf and flower—no triumphal car could have appeared half so beautiful in my eyes.

Even the square figure of Mr. Bancombe, senior, with his fur cap and woollen comforter, derived some lustre from the glory with which John overshadowed every object around him. And then when the sleigh was really out of sight, and nothing remained to me but the tracks it had made in the snow, how suddenly it grew dark and cheerless! Even the closing of the window's shutters, usually a performance of deep interest, because it was executed by John, failed to arouse me; and the remembrance of Susannah's rheumatism faded from my mind, until the return of Monday morning brought the old sleigh and its precious contents back to Mrs. Furwood's.

John was always wonderfully cool and composed, (except when he jumped out of windows to get away from me) and this circumstance materially enhanced his attractions in my eyes. And yet the love was not all on my side either—at least, I supposed that it was not; John often went to the post-office for my letters, and made the entire circuit of the village two or three times before he could summon sufficient courage to knock at the door. He sometimes sent me flowers, with an express intimation to the messenger not to tell where they came from; and he has been known to accompany me home, when, harassed by anxious fears respecting Miss Susannah, I have spent the evening at Mrs. Furwood's!

One evening, at one of our winter parties, at which social gatherings our plays were of rather a romping nature, my hair became loosened, and floated around me; when, before I could gather it up, John, prompted by the others, seized a pair of scissors, and quietly placed a lock beneath the folds of his waistcoat. I had received repeated requests from him before, through obliging friends, for even a single hair—but I refused, only from the fear of spoiling my head covering. I was quite provoked at him now; and half frightened at what he had done, John evidently avoided me.

I went home, and consoled myself with the idea that it would be cherished next his heart, as an invaluable keepsake; but the goose, not satisfied with what he had done, must endeavor to mend matters by making them worse. The next day I received a note from John containing my lock of hair, with an apology for having deprived me of it, and a hope that "as he had now returned it, I would not feel offended with him." The idiot! as though I had nothing to do but to tie it on, and let it grow again! No one but he would ever have done such a thing. I had lost my hair for nothing; so I threw that and the letter into the fire, and cried for very vexation.

But I have not yet told by what twistings and turnings of fortune my path happened to cross that of John Bancombe. It had long been decided in the family circle to send me to boarding-school for a year or two; and as Miss Crawlington's establishment at Little Rest had been highly spoken of, I was despatched thither. There, however, I should have been allowed no opportunity for falling in love; and weary and restless under such rigid discipline, I began to look about me for some means of improving my circumstances.

Not far from the seminary there was a very long, low house, which had originally been an hotel; but the present owner, having come from "out East," preferred farming to inn-keeping. They did not, however, refuse a boarder now and then; and having heard glowing accounts from those who had sojourned with the Briggs', I at length overcame the scruples of my indulgent mother, and behold me and my trunk transplanted to a more congenial soil.

Mrs. Briggs, to describe her properly, was the the sweetest woman that ever lived. No one could do anything to offend her; she was always ready to listen to everything, to be interested in everything, and to do everything that a person wished. She exercised the most motherly care over her boarders; spoiling them for cold weather by heating their beds with warming-pans—allowing them to retire and get up when they chose—and laying siege to their hearts with such a battery of buckwheat cakes, sausages, doughnuts, and apple-dumplings, that they were vanquished at once.

I can distinctly see the snug little room, with its curtained bed and clumsy, old-fashioned chairs, in which I have passed so many nights; the immensely long, low parlor, with its roaring fire of hickory logs, where they all gathered of

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an evening; while Mrs. Briggs sat in the corner with her knitting, smiling from time to time in the faces of all the others, and the wind drearily whistled around the old house. Montague Briggs, the only son, was generally absent on a courting expedition, which had already occupied his evenings for five years and a half; for not being particularly active about the farm, he usually spent his time in yawning, and perhaps feared that if he brought matters to a crisis by getting married at once, he might find the time hang heavily on his hands for want of a visiting-place.

The Briggs' tenement being just opposite Mrs. Farwood's, I had an excellent opportunity of watching all John Bancombe's out-goings and in-comings. I could distinguish him in an instant among a crowd; *then* I thought with the quick eye of love—*now* I think from a way he had of throwing his limbs about, and using them as though they were the stolen property of another.

Perhaps the interest which I felt in John was kept up by the fact of my having a rival in his affections, whom I sometimes dreaded and sometimes despised. Sarah Hilton was a fair specimen of country beauty; she was clumsily made, with bold, black eyes, a large mouth, filled with white teeth, and an excess of color in her plump cheeks. Then she was always laughing—not at all troubled with diffidence—and very partial to the society of gentlemen. She was just the one to suit such a character as John Bancombe, and had I possessed too atoms of sense I might have seen it. But their manner, I thought, partook too much of the brother and sister order; he was more respectful to me—more frank and cordial with her.

What wonderful scheme floated through my brain during my mesmerism by the blind god! Things that had hitherto possessed no interest suddenly assumed a most attractive appearance; and I began to feel an intense affection for housekeeping in all its branches. Conscious of my deficiencies in that important science, I applied myself seriously to overcome this difficulty; and I had just learnt from Mrs. Briggs the intricacies of bread-making, in order to be every way worthy of John Bancombe, when I made the discovery that that treacherous mortal had withdrawn his affections from me, and transferred the entire stock to Sarah Hilton.

At first, I could scarcely believe the evidence of my own senses. I saw the half-blown rose which I fondly imagined had been procured for me, placed amid the dark locks of my rival—I heard him call upon her in accents of entreaty to "take him out of the well," a duty which had always devolved upon me—I saw them seated side by side as man and wife in "Oats, peas, beans, and barley grows"—and the whole dark truth suddenly overshadowed me.

> "There, where I had garnered up my heart,
> Where either I must live, or bear no life;
> The fountain from the which my current runs,
> Or else dries up—*to be discarded thence!*"

I was more shocked, however, at this proof of bad taste, than grieved by the withdrawal of his affections; and, accepting the proffered hand of a noisy, Hercules-like boy, whom I had always laughed at, I entered the circles and became the merriest of the merry. The constant attentions of Ichobad Blowerscrew restored me to something like complacency; and in my utter despair I flirted with him most desperately.

I looked my trial steadily in the face until it disappeared; and then, with an enlightened vision, I turned and beheld John Bancombe. Imagine a beggar who had been dressed, for some occasion, in the habiliments of a prince, stripped of his bright apparel, and reduced to his former rags; not the fairy's wand in the days of Cinderella could have effected a more powerful change than did my altered views.

He appeared to me a very ordinary boy—or rather, a very extraordinarily awkward one; in short, I no longer loved John Bancombe. Before long, "we met, 'twas in a crowd;" and after several admiring looks—for I wore a new and very becoming bonnet—he approached me with the evident intention of seating himself; but I made a lofty bow, expressive of utter indifference—and then, as he walked away discomfited, I sat and admired my own dignity and self-command.

Thus ends my first love.

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COUSIN CLARISSA.: A SEQUEL TO "THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER THE ELMS." CHAPTER
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pg. 235

COUSIN CLARISSA.

A SEQUEL TO "THE WHITE HOUSE UNDER THE ELMS."

BY THE AUTHOR OF "SUSY L——'S DIARY."

CONCLUDED FROM PAGE 181.

CHAPTER IV.

Monday, the 6th.

I WONDER when Alexander will speak to me. He came down this morning while we were taking our places at table. He was putting on his hat in the hall to go out; for he disregards our breakfasts. He is inclined to lie a bed, or sit in his chamber, or saunter about, according as his mood is, until nine or ten o'clock. Then he is ready to swallow a few mouthfuls. Papa don't mind this; he gives him his medicines, without one word of advice or information; this is all. Aunt Ruth watches how he goes on, informs, reprimands and begs. If he gets well, I shall think it is Aunt Ruth's work, more than papa's. She called him back this morning.

"Alexander——"

"What say, ma'am?"

"I say, in the first place, good morning." Her tones were brim-full of cordiality.

"Good morning," he replied, looking back with a smile, a faint one, as if his lips were parched.

"A fine morning! isn't it?" pursued aunt.

"Fine." He was standing in the door.

"But don't go out without your breakfast. Here is the mail on the table. I will go and toast this slice of good bread for you."

"No!"

"Yes!" And the "yes" had it. Aunt went with strong steps to toast the bread; and when she came back with it, Alexander was in his place at the table, reading.

I was down a little while ago. Alexander was on the sofa, still reading foreign news to mamma and Aunt Ruth, who sat in their low chairs and sewed. Mamma and Aunt Ruth were glad to see me; they invited me to stay; but I saw that Alexander waited every moment for me to be gone, that he might go on again with his reading.

"Ah, you are a hard man!" thought I, looking at his pale, handsome face. "Very likely *you* are to ask me to be your wife! to take me away with you before Gustavus Spencer comes!" Tears came into my eyes; and to hide them, I turned to come away, telling them, as my reason for not staying, that I had writing to do.

The 15th.

To-day, we have all been to Amesbury, to Grandpapa's Jackson's, and had our tea at Capt. Alexander's. Ned Singleton and Miss Morse went with us and Uncle Hurlbut's family, including Amy, her husband and her baby. We, that is, our family went in one carriage; mamma and Aunt Ruth on the back seat; papa, Alexander and I on the front. I crowded Alexander. At first I did not. At first, it seemed that he would not allow himself to be touched by me; and so I snuggled close to papa, with the meek feeling as if Alexander were a mighty Bramin, and I a poor little Paria. But, as we rode along, I saw that nothing else cared for him; neither the birds, nor the breezes, nor the flying clouds of dust. A bobolink that swayed and tossed its wings on a tall clover-head, sung in a way that mocked his stiff bearing, "fing-a-ling, ling, ling," and then on, on, in a sweeping melody. Little the bobolink cared for him, or for any stiffness, whatever. The breezes, content a while with snapping our ribands and sweeping our shawls aside, suddenly turned upon Alexander. It was the only thing they could do in his quarter, wheedling his wide-brimmed hat off to join them in their gambols. They did it, and I was glad. Aunt Ruth and mamma were sorry.

"I am glad of it," said I, when he came back holding his hat on—for the breezes were not done with him yet. It was the first time I had directly spoken to him, since our little quarrel.

"H'm! I dare say!" throwing his head away, ostensibly to see to his coat-skirts, really to hide a smile, a legitimate, beaming smile. I saw it; I saw the smile; and thought that never before was one like it seen on his face; not even when he was a child; for they say that he was not genial even as a little child.

He turned back so as to speak to Aunt Ruth. I did not exactly understand what he said; but it was some classical thing, I know. And I know moreover that he let the full light of his smile beam on her. I know it, from the radiant character of her smile that answered his.

"I'll crowd him," thought I. "I'll not strain

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every muscle in this way to sit close to papa. I will slip along, hair's-breadth by hair's-breadth, until I am positively crowding him."

Good! he moved a little. Then he moved a little farther, looking across to see what new need there was that he should be jammed and tipped off aside his perpendicular. A little farther—and I stretched my neck to look after familiar places in the landscape; I was so busy looking, and talking to papa, mamma and Aunt Ruth! I was so busy, that I moved nearer and nearer, crowded him more and more.

"I'd like to know," he began, looking down on the little room that was left to him.

I did not mind him. I talked with papa about the man and boy that hoed potatoes, just over the wall. I crowded though, with a steady force.

"What do you mean, Miss Clarissa?" said he, now looking me steadily in the face. "What are you doing this for?" showing me what I had done; how I had pushed him to the extremity of the seat. "What are you doing it for?"

"'Cause," in a dogmatic way, as if that were sufficient reason.

"'Cause!" laughing in an explorive manner. "Did you ever see such a mischievous thing, Mrs. Jackson? did ever you, Aunt Ruth?" By-the-bye, it is curious that he always says, "Aunt Ruth." She is only four *years* his senior, and is fresher, more vigorous than he. But she has a way of taking care of him, as if she were his aunt or his mother.

"Ah, you shan't crowd him in that way!" said mamma, quite shocked at my impoliteness, and taking hold of my arm to draw me back where I ought to be.

Aunt Ruth knew well enough what I meant, what I felt. She laughed with downright heartiness. So did I. So did we all, papa inclusive—as soon as papa could find out at what we were making merry.

Alexander and I quarreled whenever we came near each other, for the rest of the day; I laughing in an open, honest manner; he trying to hide it with grimaces, with looking at other people, with his "h'ms!" and other rebuffs. When we were at his father's, and when his father and his mother led us round to see their garden and their "henery," as the old gentleman called it, where were all sorts of hens, with all sorts of Chinese and Polish names, Alexander took Aunt Ruth this way, and that way, and the other way, to see every bush and every chicken. He was still enough; but Aunt Ruth caught the chickens in the thick grass, and made pets of them. She caught them so easily! while I went running in all directions, still the soft little rascals evaded my hand.

For the rest, we went half way up "Pow Hill," to look away upon a landscape, one of the most beautiful in our land; to see how the silvery Pow-wow threads the green meadow in a graceful, meandering course, as if it knew all the beauties that abound, and were dallying with them; how the church-towers and noble dwellings, the proud elms and limes of the grand old town. Newburyport do meet and mingle in the distant view; and how the glimmering sea stretches beyond.

We passed by the white cottage of the poet, Whittier. It is in the midst of the village, in the corner of two streets. But it stands back a little, with a yard. The turf was soft and green around it; flowering shrubs hugged it close; catalpas, and, I believe, other large trees, overshadowed and half hid it; so that it seemed a holy, a meet place of rest for him whose

> "life hath been
> A weary work of tongue and pen,
> A long, harsh strife with strong-willed men;"

and who falters now, as if soon he must be done working. God be with him through the rest of his days, and bless him!

CHAPTER V.

July, the 14th.

Cousin Davy Hurlbut, who reads law at East Swamscott, has been here to-day. I let him know that I found Gustavus Spencer's letter in his Latin dictionary, that I read it, and that now I despise it and its author. He laughed as if my words were nothing; but he will see. I think he left the letter there purposely for me to see it; although, as Gustavus' friend, I do not know why he should. He says Gustavus has written that he will come before the middle of August. Oh, dear me!

I know what I will do! I will go down and be as civil as I can to Alexander. I hear him reading aloud to mamma and Aunt Ruth. He reads a great deal aloud to them of late. He is almost always in the sitting-room with them, when they are there. He took them out to ride, this morning, while papa was on his round, and I at Uncle Hurlbut's. He gains every way. Strength, flesh and color come. But he is no more than half pleased with congratulations; he says the flesh and strength will go, when he shuts himself up to his business again, faster than they come now. This makes Aunt Ruth and all the rest look sober—all but me. I confess I can't care much for him, he cares so little for me. It is his old iron-built father's whim,

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not to buy farms for any of his boys, or to fill store-houses for them, or do anything for them, while he lives, but give them educations and then turn them adrift. The rest is to be done in his last will and testament. One ought certainly to have some pity for the sick son of *such* a father. I believe I have a little for Alexander now. I will go, while it lasts, and be gracious to him. Perhaps he will then be gracious to me. "A thing," he calls me oftenest, with the term variously qualified, but always with some disparaging epithet. I wish he could see, as everybody else does, that I have my good points. Perhaps he will this time.

Later.

He was reading aloud to himself some strong editorials. Mamma and Aunt Ruth were in the kitchen, with their heads together over the jelly Catharine had been making. Now, I can never say exactly the right thing to Alexander, when I do my best. And it is because I am ordinarily made fearful and self-conscious by knowing his want of friendliness toward me. To-day, I was more timid than usual; and, of course, deported myself more foolishly than usual. Until I was well vexed; and then I think I was more sensible. I think he liked me better then. But I see that it is all over between us. He would offer himself to a chair as soon as to me; while I would as lief have a regular Bluebeard for my husband. With Aunt Ruth he is so different! And well may be; for she has some dignity and self-possession. She came in while we were stumbling and tripping each other to-day. She smiled quietly, spoke quietly; and he the same. I thought that it was as if, uniting them, were silken threads on which the mutual words and even thoughts went back and forth; while between him and me all manner of abstractions and roughness lay.

Well, my mamma loves me, at any rate; and Aunt Ruth, the Aunt Ruth he thinks so excellent. She loves me better than she does him; for she lectures him; and me she never does.

Wednesday, 27th.

We are to give a very large party to-morrow, in consideration of—of Amy's baby, in fact. Everybody wants a chance to see and get hold of Amy's baby. And then we, his relatives, have a little pride to be gratified in showing him; for he is a superb fellow.

The 29th. Morning.

Baby behaved like a little prince. He had more dignity than any other of the company; for they passed him from hand to hand, tossed him, took him out into yard and garden, gabbered to him incessantly in unknown tongues, and kissed him, as if they would take pieces out of his cheeks. He cooed a little, smiled a little; did not once cry, or go beside himself, in any way.

Cousin Davy rode over, and was here at supper. He followed me when I went to the office to bring a book for papa and Dr. Holmes. He shut the door after him, and came close to me.

"I've seen Bigelow to-day."

"Has he come?" starting; for Bigelow was of Gustavus' party in California.

"Yes, he's come. He says there was a great smash-up there the day before he left."

"A smash-up?"

"Yes. They've been speculating, some of them, there, with a high hand. Bigelow kept clear of it. He has brought home a pretty round sum. But Gustavus"—here he paused and looked at me; as if he were considering whether it was best to go on.

"Well, what about Gustavus?" I asked, looking in all the wrong places for the book papa wanted.

"Why, he has been at Sacramento, you know. Well, Bigelow was at San Francisco with every thing on board ready to sail, when news came down that Spencer, Slidell & Co., together with two other companies, had—can't you find the book, cousin?"

"Had what?—yes; I shall find it shortly."

"That they were, in fact, going to ruin; were, in fact, gone to ruin. Bigelow wanted to stay to see what could be done. His brother was going immediately to see. If anything can be done for Gustavus, he well do it. But I'm sorry for him."

I pitied him for the downfall of his earth-built citadel. But I knew that it would be good for him; and I trembled with gratefulness. My hands trembled; and I suppose my voice did, when I said—"I can't think where that book is. I wish you would help me find it, Davy." For I did not like to have him stand watching me.

"I will." But he did not. He came closer to me, looked me sharply in the face, stopped the hand that went here and there along the rows of books, and, holding it fast, said, "Cousin Clarissa, are you glad or sorry?"

"I am glad. Because I think it would spoil him to go on with his whole soul set on his money."

"But your face is troubled."

"Well, I pity Gustavus, he will be so torn and upset, for a while. I am thinking too, that he may determine to stay and go over the same rough ground again."

Papa and Dr. Holmes now came in; for they

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would wait for the book no longer. Papa put his hand on it in an instant; it was just where he told me I would find it.

"Ah, Clarissa!" said he, looking up between his glasses and his eyebrows. "You never find anything. Your mother is worth five hundred of you."

Finding that they would sit there in the round arm-chairs to consult the book, at their leisure, Davy and I had nothing left for us, but to join the company in the other rooms.

Aunt Ruth was holding Amy's baby when we came out. Ben Frank and Amy looked on, every moment, from their seat on the sofa; while stiff Alexander—stiff no longer—had his hand on aunt's chair, and bent a little over her and the baby, as if he were her spouse, and baby's pa. He did not notice us when we came; but Ruth did. She called us to hear baby say—"gov, gov;" which he did, simply upon her smiling upon him, and without any of the clamorous efforts others had made to induce him to talk. I watched Alexander, while he and others watched Aunt Ruth and baby. I saw that he had an air as if he were both proud and content. But I have no more to say about him or anybody, this night.

August 3rd.

There came despatches, telegraphic and other, verifying the report brought by Bigelow. Bigelow says that Gustavus has speculated in buying and selling. That he has guarded himself conscientiously against all manner of over-reaching and fraudulent proceedings; so that no man can say with reference to a single business transaction of his—"you wronged me, sir, in this;" but that, going straight-forward, with a clear brain and a strong will, everything has prospered in his hands. He says that "he's a frank, manly fellow;" and that "everybody off there likes him."

I wish some sort of despatch, telegraphic, or magnetic, would assure me how he will proceed. I want to see him. I have the feeling that he thinks of me in his trouble, and would like it very well, if he could sit or walk by my side, and spin out all his thoughts and feelings into words.

I met Judith Humphreys at Mr. Tracy's to-day. She has, all along, had blushing, smiling questions to put to Cousin Davy, touching his friend Gustavus. But, this day, she had lip-curlings and head-tossings.

"This is the way!" said she, twisting her parasol vigorously. "People who begin in nothing, if they make ever so much show for a while, always end in nothing, at last, mind it when you will."

"No, indeed!" answered Mrs. Crane, who was playing with the three year's-old Tommy Tracy. "Not in this country, Judith! not by any means. I see you, Tommy." Tommy was at bow-peep now, by his mother's chair. "For instance, your father was the son of a very, *very* poor man, who had a troop of children to provide for. My grandfather, both my grandfathers, were rich. So that—Tommy, Tommy, come and see if you can find your marble. It is somewhere about me and in plain sight. So that, as I was going to say, your father began in nothing; now he is a wealthy man. Mine began in riches; but he died poor." She was filled now with tender thoughts of her father. Tommy hunted her skirts and lap for his marble, but she did not know that he was near.

Judith blushed and looked angry at what she said. She gathered the folds of her parasol, and said—"I don't know as anybody ought to be twitted for their poor relations."

Mrs. Crane looked up surprised. "Judith Humphreys, you know I could not mean to twit you, as you say. You know I do not think poverty the least thing against one. On the contrary, in my mind, the very thing that most recommends your father, is, his having made his own way; educated himself, established himself. I don't know whether he is ashamed of the poverty of his good old father. If he is, it is the thing that most condemns him."

Judith looked as if she were a little ashamed of herself. "To be sure—why, to be sure," she began, in an apologetic tone; but Mrs. Crane talked with the noble and excellent Mrs. Tracy, and again hid Tommy's marble.

The 6th.

To-day Uncle Hurlbut received a newspaper from Gustavus, with the hasty dash of a pencil at the commencement of the intended sailing of a certain ship, on a certain day.

"Wind and weather permitting," said Uncle Hurlbut, who dropped in to tell us about it, "he will be here early next week." He had a well-pleased look, as if he were speaking of a son's return.

The 8th.

Ah, there cannot be too much done up to Uncle Hurlbut's to make Gustavus' welcome a glad one. "*Poor* fellow!" they all call him, or all but uncle, and with tears in their eyes. Uncle does not stop to pity people who are made poor, if they have good use of their hands. He does not like to see it, if people who have good use of their hands, stop to be pitied. He is curious to see how Gustavus will carry himself under his reverses.

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CHAPTER VI.

Thursday morning, the 11th.

Last evening, Uncle Hurlbut came to our village, bringing Amy to sit with us while he was doing his business. Mamma and Aunt Ruth had gone out to see a sick woman; and so Amy and I sat in my chamber, as we used to sit, hour after hour, before she was married. We found it so good being by ourselves, going over the old times and the new, that, when uncle came, we begged him to go on, and leave us to walk up.

"Just as we have done, oh, so many times!" said Amy, with her loving eyes on my face.

We were very thoughtful, very happy on our way. I heard it from Amy how no human being has such reason to be grateful as she, with such a good, such a *dear* husband, such a blessed little baby, and so many good friends. She heard it from me that I am thankful, and, most of the time, happy; but that I have had many disturbances in the last three or four years. We laughed some over them; and I, at least, let a few silent tears drop on the way; for I was a little discouraged. In my utter ignorance of what was to come—between Gustavus and me, I mean—the future looked dark to me. I dreaded it. I wished that, some way, I might sleep and dream out the rest of my days.

By-and-bye we were there; and, while I sat resting for the walk back, they talked in the still way that suited the twilight time, about Gustavus' boyhood. Aunt told us little anecdotes of him, gave us accounts of his pretty, loving ways, as if he were her own boy. Uncle did not say much. He sat with his chin on his hand, and with a look as if his thoughts were far away. We knew, when he spoke, of what he had been thinking; for he said—"he was always a manly, sensible fellow. He had something that was reasonable and like a man, about him, even when he was a little thing; never exacting any thing; hardly ever asking for anything; taking what we gave—not as our own boys have always done; but often with moist eyes; and, always, as if he were grateful, as if he felt it was not his of right. Did you ever think of it, mother?"

"Yes, indeed!" replied aunt, speaking earnestly, and with tears coming. "It was always a grief to me. It has been ever since he went away; for we can know how eager he really was for money, and clothes, and books, and every thing, by the way he has worked and saved to get them, since he has been gone. I am so sorry he has lost it all; because he won't let us do anything for him, as he would if he were our own child."

"I've got some cents in my box. I'll give him them, any way," said good little Johnny.

A quick, light step came up to the house. A tall, compact shape, with a certain air of dignified grace, both in attitude and outline, was in the door of the room where we sat. We all sprang to our feet and gave little thrilling cries of joy. One moment the shape halted in the door, and the dark eyes ran inquiringly over the group; then we heard a gushing voice say—"father—mother."

Aunt took him in her arms and wept. He too wept. I knew how tender and grateful his heart was toward those who were welcoming him out of the deep places in their hearts, as if they were his own parents, as if that were his own home. He kissed uncle too; laughing a little, as he did it; but with the tears starting afresh. He kissed us all. He held us in his arms, looking steadily in our faces; he did not say much, though. He seemed too much moved. He said, drawing a long breath as of relief after a turbulent time—"oh, I am glad to be at home once more."

I stayed until a late hour, and then Gustavus brought me home.

Oh, the night was so blue, clear and still! I am sure there was never before so still and blue a night. Gustavus looked up to the familiar stars, away to the dark, familiar woods and hills, and then home to my face. He seemed not to know what to say; how to express the deep pleasure and thankfulness. But he told me that he loves me with his whole heart; and that he would no longer have stayed so far from me, for all the gold in California.

"Good!" thought I. "He will be content with me, then, if he has no heaps of gold. And he will know that I don't love and accept him, for his money. This is good! I am glad!"

"Clarissa loves me a little, don't she?" asked he. He had been watching my face.

"Yes."

"Only a little?" gathering my hand close to his heart. I did not speak, at once; and he repeated the question.

"She loves you forty times more than you ever *can* her; ever!"

"We will see about that," laughing and kissing my finger-tips.

Evening.

Gustavus has been here. He and papa have gone out now together, to see some of the people.

See if this isn't outrageous bad! Spencer, Slidell & Co., lost only one speculation, and this comparatively a paltry one. He is richer than a Jew. I do not let him touch me, since this came out. I pretend that I will have nothing to do with him, since it was no rich Jew that I accepted; but a poor fellow who had neither

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money nor home. He laughs heartily, gets my hand and keeps it, in spite of me. The rest laugh; even stiff Alexander. They think it rather a fine thing that he is so rich. I care nothing about it, beyond this; it would have been discouraging to lose all that for which he had been striving for so many years. And he can now have an easy, comfortable time; while I can help Cousin Henry along a little, can do whatever I wish for Mrs. Cormick and many other poor people. Our minister has a hard time with his large family, and low salary. I will make his heart cheerful and strong, by giving him a hundred dollars every year that he and I live. I will——

But Gustavus comes without papa. I suppose I may as well let my diary go, after this. I suppose my head and my hands will be full of Gustavus, so that there will be no time or chance for writing in a diary.

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LIGHT AFTER DARK.
BY ELISE GRAY.
Peterson's Magazine (1849-1892); Nov 1853; VOL. XXIV., No. 5.; American Periodicals
pg. 252

LIGHT AFTER DARK.

BY ELISE GRAY.

Did you ever pass through a long, wild winter? Not an ordinary one of three moons, when freezing and dissolving alternate; when old Boreas blusters fiercely a few days and nights; when the snow drifts high up to the windows and makes curious, lace-like curtains over the panes; then the storm is past—the gentle south wind blows softly like a strange breath from the sweet summers you remember, and all the snow melts from the grass, that still retains a little of its native hue. But one of those winters that come like angels's visits, only *not welcome*, when almost as soon as the dead, dry leaves begin to fly in the chilly autumn winds, merry children cry out in glee that the first snow-flakes are falling. But *you* go to the window and look out very *sadly* to think that winter is coming so early. Very soon you find that it has indeed come, and oh, what a winter it proves to be! The snows seem eternal as those that crown the high mountain peaks; the piercing winds unrelenting. You never see the blue sky, or only now and then, when there is a little opening in the ashes over your head, but soon the beautiful spot is covered again. You think of glorious azure heavens—of earth covered with green velvet carpet, painted with roses—of perfumed breeze and gentle dews, but all this seems to you like a mysterious dream, while you look out at the storm; and that all this beauty should *return*, seems to you as impossible as when an old man mourns his childhood, and know it cannot come back. As you watched the drifting snow, you seemed to yourself to be in another world. But you were *not*. The storms and gloom *did*, at last, pass away. Do you remember one summer morning, long after, when you stooped down by a dark-leaved forget-me-not, with shining dew-drops on it, and your tears fell there too; how just then you heard a bird sing high above you, in the top of a green tree, and your heart sent up a song to God, thanking him for winter as well as summer; for storm as well as calm; and for darkness that makes the after light as much brighter?

Rich man in the velvet chair, counting the piles of bank notes and bright golden coins lying on the white marble tablet. Do you remember when you were *poor*, and had hard oaken chair and table of plain pine; when instead of your rich palace with soft, mossy, flowery carpets, you had uncovered floors in two small upper rooms high above the pavement of a dusty, crowded street? You do. You know how you struggled then with poverty and despondency, yet in your low estate determined to be rich and noble in your heart, though purse were poor and garment mean? You remember the day you gave the penny bun to the pale, thin, beggar child you met shivering in the crowd, and now your heart felt a keen pang of hunger for greater power to bless?

You remember well, too, that strange day when Fortune, nay, when *Providence* did change your lot; how after this, in bank and counting-house, men bowed low to you? You know how strange it seemed to have ability to gratify your tastes for the intellectual and the beautiful, and scatter to the needy your hundreds and thousands, where once you gave the little penny bun.

Honored man, do you remember when you were stricken by the poisoned lash of slander? when though your conscience was sustained, a black blot fell upon your name, and all for a little gold, that when weighed in the balance with integrity, was in *your* scale lighter than a grain of dust?

You remember the day when he who had smitten you was forced to own the wound he made, and before many witnesses wipe off with his own mean hand the blot he dropped upon your name? That name has *added* honor now.

Author of well known fame.

You remember when you chose for your life-toil to dig in the mines of thought, and dive to the depths of the soul for hid treasures? You knew that this was *labor*, and not all graceful *play*, as they who know not falsely say? You knew that as the rough ore of the golden mine, and as the curious things of the sea, so must *your ore* and *your pearls* be purified and polished?

So while others slept, you worked alone at midnight to try your ore in the crucible, and brighten your gems. At last they were ready for the world's eye. How your manly heart trembled then. Was it for fear that gaze would not *praise* you?

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No, it was not *fame* you sought as your great aim. You were *poor*. You wanted gold—not to buy bread, *not this;* but far away there grew a flower, more needful to you than your daily bread. You longed to transplant it, but you had no spot where it might bloom, and they who cherished it in its own garden would not give it to your care.

You sent your costly goods to the place where such are bought and sold, but alas! the vender could not buy, for the world's market was too full. So your pearls came back to you, but you sent them forth again, and so did you many times till at last you despaired. One night there came to you, not your rejected treasures returned to you again, but they had remained, and instead came many bright golden coins!

It was your *first success!* How it bewildered you! You thought you must be dreaming. So you went to the open casement to breathe the cool air of night.

But you were *not* dreaming. You know it *now*, for you have a garden—a sweet one—*your own;* and in it blooms *that flower—yours* now. Your presence is its sunlight. Its fragrance is more to you than the incense of the world's praise that floats around you.

Fair is Hope when she treadeth on the dark foot-prints of Despair.

Loving, gentle mother, you remember the youth of forehead high and raving locks, you called your only son. You remember the bright promise, the praise, the love that were like beautiful garlands around him. You can recall that hour when you were wakened from a sweet dream of your boy by a kiss on your cheek, and a grasp of your hand, and opening your drowsy eyes, you saw your darling just come from walls of school to rest at home. You know how your pulse quickened with joy! and then in an instant was almost deadened with fear, as you beheld the cheeks and lips that when last you touched were full and rosy with health, now white and thin as if by long and deep disease. Then you heard a hollow, half-suppressed cough, and it fell on your ear like the sound of earth on coffin lid.

Memory brings clearly back the next night. Your boy had gone early to his chamber—the dear room always *his*. He was only tired, he said.

It was a cool, autumn evening, and by a gentle fire on the hearth you and the boy's doting father, and his two young sisters, and your kind physician were gathered round. While the doctor gave his grave counsel *that cough* often sounded through the house. Oh, what a knell! solemn as toll of funeral bell.

You were not despairing. No, but fear had fallen upon you, a shadow so dark, so awful, that for a little you forgot the star of hope. * * *

A few more days and nights and you were far away, you and your feeble son. You were on the broad ocean. It was midnight, and your boy slept, but the rocking of the vessel did not close your eyes in slumber. You heard the sailor's tread on deck, but it was not this that kept you waking. You were weeping and wandering, and longing to lift the veil of the future, to see if your sorrow would darken into death or brighten into bliss. Oh, would your boy's living form bound in again at his father's door, or his cold clay be borne in there? Ah, you *could not tell.* So you prayed to Him who pitieth His children, and thanked Him that your child was a child of God.

A few more days and you were on a beautiful island of the sea. The air was warm and the sky sunny. You were wandering on the beach with your pale son. You gazed at him earnestly while his eyes sought a far-off ship, and you thought his cheeks had grown a little fresher, and the cough a little lighter, and you trembled almost painfully. You did not dare hope much, and when you wrote those anxious watchers at home, you knew not what to say. A few weeks had passed and hope had strengthened. The cheeks were *surely* fresher—the cough vanishing—the step stronger! A little longer, and that tiny island seemed too small for joy so great as yours! * * * * * On sped the days.

One bright morning a carriage stopped at the door of your home. *You* were in it, and *your boy.* Over the stone steps he leaped at one bound. A father's arms received him and sisters clung to him!

Ever after when you heard the storm beat against your windows, it brought no gloom to your spirit, for you always thanked God that the rain and snows were not falling on your son's grave. Oh, how much more bright and beautiful was life because the shadow of death had passed over it.

Maiden of glance radiant with an earnest joy. You remember the fair ideal Fancy painted as the only one *you* could ever "love, honor, and obey?" You remember when the real *embodiment* first appeared before you? You know how you admired—how different seemed *one* from all others around you—how soon you learned to love the speech of *one* more than voices of rare singers, or music of harp—how that forehead and eye grew so dear to you, that when you had seen them you asked to go alone to weep—how others grew dull to you, and life was dim when you saw

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not the one light so dear, yet when near it, your heart dared not rejoice in its presence. In your prayers you know *what you pleaded for*. Oh, you remember too, deep, far in your heart, when the hope first entered there that you were *beloved;* aye, and that holy hour when this sweet hope was changed for vows soon to be sealed—never to be broken. Bright is the morning joy that cometh after the midnight sorrow.

Happy Christian, loving God and loving earth; joying in the life of faith; its perfect rest; its blessed confidence; its certain hope; its fervent prayer; its gladsome praise! Oh, you remember well the weary life of *doubt;* the shadows; the honors; the gloom; the agony; the mists; the snares; the wild storm; the deep darkness; and brighter is the true light that *now* shineth for the darkness that was *before.*

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BLOSSOMS OF TRUTH.: LIFE.
BY MARGARET LEE RUTENBUR.
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pg. 257

BLOSSOMS OF TRUTH.

BY MARGARET LEE RUTENBUR.

LIFE.

WHAT lessons of change that strange thing called life presents to the view. How little we know in the night what another day may bring; and how little at day what may be the night; the rich may become poor, the poor rich! The wheel of fate seems unceasing in its revolvings, ever rolling forth happiness or misery to the countless throng of human souls that wait to receive their portion of good or ill, as it may be. Then why is it that we are so fearful of that change from—not what *I* would call life to death—but from death to life?—for I fully agree with the writer who says,

> "They are the living, they alone
> Whom thus we call the dead."

Strange! if there is a clime (and should we not believe it?) where the "mourner looks up and is glad." Strange, indeed, it is that the human heart should shrink from the glory of such a resting-place, and yearningly cling to the frail and perishable things of earth, preferring its dim and care-worn paths to the "green pastures and still waters" of Paradise: the deceitful hearts that beat in mortal frames to the sinless spirits that dwell in Eden's land: the changeful ties that bind us for a season here, to the unbroken links of love that chain bright souls in heaven.

Here, (we are told) all is "vanity and vexation of spirit:" there, is harmony, and the music unceasing that falls from seraph tongues: here, pain, sorrow, and tears—there, health, joy and smiles. True, there are times when the rainbow of joy appears in the sky of hope, and the star of faith gleams brightly on the human heart—and then dark shadows fall, the rainbow has passed far away, and the mist of fate envelopes the rays of faith. And then again, we may not be truly unhappy even in this world, if the mind is philosophical enough to balance itself aright against the chances and changes of human destiny! We must ever "look aloft," that is the great secret of much happiness: are we sad and oppressed by the cares and sorrows of poverty, let us look upward! there, at last, if we live aright, riches far above those of mortal life may be our portion; riches of eternal life and peace! Have our fellow beings wrung our hearts with the conviction that there is no faithful love, no permanent friendship here? "Upward and onward!" "excelsior!" there, the "mortal shall put on immortality, and exceeding great" may be our joy in the love and friendship of heaven.

"THE FOOL HATH SAID IN HIS HEART, THERE IS NO GOD."

WHO pencils with divine art the fine blendings of light and shade upon the summer cloud? Who bends the 'bow, with its delicate and beautiful colors, into a graceful arch? Who scatters the evening stars like drops of gold upon the azure floor of heaven? Who lights one resplendent orb to illumine the day, and another to beautify the night? Who is the keeper of the deep, deep sea? Who bids it cease to rage, and wear a tranquil smile? Who descends amid its waves and directs the seeds of the crimson coral, or weaves upon its fearful loom in such pure and fadeless hues the robe of the singing shell? Who tunes the organ of the winds and plays the furious tempest, or the milder breeze? Who speaks in the rolling thunder, or fires the vivid lightning athwart the pathway of heaven and earth? What limner paints the plumage of the wild-wood bird? What power causes such melodious strains to come forth from its little throat? Who tells it where and how to build its innocent home? Who weaves upon the carpet of earth such gorgeous and beautiful flowers? Who guides the streamlet in its peaceful course, as it meanders through the verdant glade? What artist tinted the blue eye of the sapphire, or the crimson cheek of the ruby? Who moulded the golden crown of the topaz? or gave to the diamond its veil of dazzling sheen? Who breathes upon the sere branches of the tree, and lo! it bringeth forth its leaves, its buds, its blossoms, and then its delicious fruit? Who gives all the blessings that fall like drops of dew "upon the just and the unjust?" Who comes in a tone of sorrow to the guilty, but in the still, sweet whisper of mercy to the penitent? Who but Him the Divine Architect and Giver of all we see and hear? Oh! bow thy head upon thy breast, thou who hast said in thy heart, "There is no God."

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A DECEMBER REVERIE.: I--LOST IN THE SNOW.
BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.
Peterson's Magazine (1849-1892); Dec 1853; VOL. XXIV., NO.6.; American Periodicals
pg. 0_005

A DECEMBER REVERIE.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

I.—LOST IN THE SNOW.

WINTER is in the air, on the hills, everywhere. The bit of blue sky, a mere strip, seen between the roofs of the long street, has the cold glitter of Damascus steel. How the tempest rattles the casement, roars around the chimnies, or shrieks down the avenue! Out in the country it is blowing a hurricane. The woods writhe and groan as men do upon the rack; and the wind comes down the hill-side sighing piteously like an old grey-beard asking alms.

At sea what a night! No moon, not even a star, but everywhere utter darkness. We are there in imagination now, swinging, midway, in a black abyss. Swinging, did we say? Yet more than that, beaten, flung about, almost drowned at times. The monsters of the deep, hideous and gigantic presences, unseen, yet all around us, now hurl mountains of waters down, now fling the stout ship as a child would a stone far into obscurity, now prostrate her helpless on her side, hold her down, and trample her under their tempest feet. Oh! for morning. Think of shipwreck and death out here, a thousand miles from shore, with a grave ten thousand fathoms down:—if, indeed, that can be called a grave, where rest never is, but an eternal tossing to and fro, like the limbs that Dante saw seething in the black cauldron of hell. Lightning would be a relief! It is a fevered dream realized, one of those where, forever and forever, we fall; and still, after countless ages, after periods that created worlds measure as eternities, are falling and yet falling.

We are on the Alps! A storm has surprised us between two stations, a December tempest such as is seen nowhere else. How ghastly everything around looks. The vallies below us no longer reveal, far down their sides, the farm house or even village; but an ocean, apparently bottomless, yet churned into foam on top, rolls above them, lashing its shores wildly—the spray rising in great clouds, in spectral columns, as from the awful feet of that mightiest and most wierd of Nature's enchanters, Niagara. High aloft, the white peaks lift their dreadful fronts, like the sheeted ghosts of some Titanic world, dead before Time began. The winds, at those tremendous heights, seem winds from another sphere, where neither attraction, nor other earthly influence has power—winds that come commissioned, like spirits from the abyss of woe, to work evil and death at will.

The icy hand of the monster is upon us. The fine snow penetrates our nostrils, distils into our blood, freezes at last our very heart. We try to struggle on. We urge our weary horse forward, and, in our eagerness, would have pushed him over the precipice, had he not himself drawn back. He seems to know that our life is being chilled at its fountain, for he often turns his head, and looks pityingly at us. But we are fast losing consciousness now. We have a dear one, pledged to be ours on our return—alas! our *return*. The thought is too much for us. But we choke down the tears. Then we think of home, of the dear old parents, of the warm breakfast-room, and of the long, long years they will wait in vain for the return of their lost son. Again it is too much for us. The church-yard rises before us now, where our ancestors have been laid for three generations, but where the last of the line will never, never find sepulture. In wild dreams like these is it a wonder we hear a bell? That we fancy it the sweet Sabbath bell of our boyhood? That we are, in imagination, a sinless child again? That, as we cross the violet-scented meadow to church, we hear angel voices alternating, as we used to, with the silver clangor of that airy messenger? That borne upward on

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the wings of a holy rapture, we behold heaven's gates open, and see, as Christian did, when he had crossed the river, the shining walls and jeweled streets of the New Jerusalem? That then ——?

The wind howls, the air darkens with the thickening tempest, and around the prostrate form of a traveller gathers a winding-sheet of snow. Up over his feet, up over his body, up across heart and face, some unseen, pious angel draws the pallid grave-cloth. The wind, still raging for its prey, drifts the veil continually aside, uncovering the limbs, as if to mock at the ministrations of the pitying spirit. But the face is still reverently hidden. Type of the great mystery beyond death! For is not the countenance the physical revelation of the soul?—the soul immortal, and sacred forever, God be thanked, by his good blessing, from the powers of darkness and death.

The bell tolls on. Is that angelic hand, which reverently covered up the face, busy in ringing the soul's passing? At least one mourner is there. Meekly the faithful horse stands over his master, gazing earnestly at what can still be discerned of the well known form, regardless of the gale that blows so wildly, of the air so full of the blinding tempest. Ah! thou rich Dives, dead on thy stately couch, beneath the canopy of purple velvet, thou hast no friend, even as humble as this, to watch over thy remains! In this world thou hadst thy fill. But in the next——

Still the bell tolls. Still the tempest rages, the snow-drifts accumulate, the night, the inexorable night, draws on. And still, true amid all, the faithful horse stoops down and gazes at his master, occasionally lifting up his head to utter one of those cries, such as God has given even to dumb animals, to summon help in their utmost need.

II.—THE VISION.

How fragrant this chamber! The breath of flowers is all around us, but sweeter than all is the presence of maidenhood, asleep in its innocence. The snowy curtains of the bed are not purer than her own stainless soul. There is a white statuette on the mantel-piece; it is a guardian angel; but it looks not holier than would her face, if we could see it. The moonlight, falling across the floor, seems like a strip of heaven's own pavement, laid along her chamber. Angel presences guard her! Beautiful as Imogene she lies there, as beautiful, and, if that can be, purer.

"Fresh lily!
And whiter than the sheets!
* * * * 'Tis her breathing that
Perfumes the chamber thus."

She dreams. Pleasant are the fancies that gather in her brain, as that smile shows, and makes the impossible possible, by increasing her loveliness. She sees herself, in a vision, a bride. The church bells are ringing merrily, young girls are strewing flowers in her path, the robed priest stands waiting with the book open before him. Never seemed the heavens so blue, the air so sweet, the landscape so beautiful. A very glory fills the time-stained old church, as if a light not of earth had flooded its aisles. Oh! what delicious sunshine, that really seems musical, or rather seems music, and graceful motion, and whispers of love all together.

But a cloud comes over her face. Her dream changes. She has reached the altar, but instead of the bridegroom, whom she glances blushingly up to see, she beholds a skeleton, in grave-clothes, who extends his bony hand. Yes! death is there. She is the bride of the dead. The awful conviction flashes down and into her brain, like lightning shattering through mid-sky to the central earth: and, with a shriek, she rises up in her bed, looking herself like a sheeted ghost, just startled from the tomb.

The sky too has changed. Clouds have covered the moon. The December wind has risen, and wails around the house. As she listens, trembling and in fright, the storm increases; the gale howls as if evils spirits had come to mock her; and flurries of snow dash against the window-panes, like the wet garments of outcast sisters, who go by driven by pitiless Fates. Gradually, through the black night, she half discerns shadowy forms outside. Faces of brides, widowed in the nuptial hour, glance mournfully in, and then vanish. Faces of angel children, such as climb around a young mother's knee, press themselves wistfully against the panes; but, just as she opens her arms for them to enter, a taunting laugh is heard, and they are borne ruthlessly away, as if by some shapeless, gigantic shadow. While ever, in the pauses of the gale, a moaning voice is heard, as if wandering about outside, now faintly tapping at the casement, now sobbing in the street below, but never, oh! never, assuming shape, even for an instant, to her straining eyes.

When morning breaks, a pale figure prematurely old, leaves the chamber, where a bright, sunny-faced young girl had entered the night before. Days pass, yet still she droops, nor can all the reasoning of friends convince her that her vision had been only a dream.

"He was to have been here at Christmas,"

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she invariably says. "We shall not have long to wait. Bear with me till then. When he last wrote, you know, he was expecting to leave Italy soon, and cross the Alps. Christmas will soon be here, and, if he is alive, I know he will come."

They know it also, and can say no more. But Christmas comes and goes, yet he is still absent.

III.—THE WINTER BREAKFAST.

Breakfast is on the table, and the little family has gathered to partake of the meal, all except the daughter. She cannot be persuaded to leave her room. She has not left it, indeed, for weeks. Widowed before she is wedded, she secludes her grief and herself from the world, nor can all the efforts of her parents rouse her from her apathy.

The good mother sits nearest the fire, carefully shawled by the loving hand of the father, for the morning is bitterly cold. The physician, who has thus early called to see his patient, partakes of the meal with them, glancing over the morning paper as he reads. A serious aspect is on all. For they know that death hovers about the threshold, waiting his time, which is sure to come.

Christmas has long since gone. The New Year is many weeks advanced. Hope has long ago died out even in the hearts of the parents. Thus it is, that, as the bleak winds without shriek, in alternate rage and laughter around the house, they seem like merciless destiny exulting and mocking in its revenge. Exulting that it has broke the heart of that darling, only child. Mocking at the agony of the parents, which love for her, as yet, compels them to conceal.

Suddenly the door opens, and a fair white form, like an angel of purity come down from heaven, enters the room. Paler than whitest marble is that sweet face no longer, for a vivid flush of excitement is upon it; the lately languid eyes sparkle; the form has ceased to droop, and is erect, animated, electric in every movement.

The parents, the physician start to their feet: and the servant stands amazed. But the intruder is the first to speak.

"He is coming, he is coming," she cries, and rushing to her mother, she falls on that ever welcome bosom.

The parents look to the physician, who sadly shakes his head and touches his forehead. At that instant the invalid glances up. She sees the gesture, and rising eagerly, exclaims,

"You think me delirious. But I am not. As sure as I live, he is coming home. This day. This hour. I know it, because I feel it. Have you never heard of such things, doctor? Think you his soul, in the agony of expected death, would not come to me? Think you, if he were still living, his spirit would not come to me? Stranger things are done every day, under the name of science; and yet you doubt me."

She speaks so earnestly, so coherently that they are staggered. They look at each other in strange doubt.

"Hark!" she says, suddenly.

It is a group for a painter. They have left the table, as we have said, and stand in the middle of the room, the mother in the centre, and the others around her. As the daughter speaks, she half rises from her parent's shoulder, with finger lifted, and head inclined to listen. A white rose, recovering from the shower that has beaten it down, is but a faint type of her graceful beauty.

"Hark!" she says again, "those are wheels. I told you so."

Oh! the triumphant tone of those words, the radiant joy of that countenance.

It was as she said. Wheels were actually heard crunching on the snow, rapid wheels, wheels that drew nearer and nearer.

They all stood breathless. Would the carriage go on, or stop at the door?

The carriage stopped.

Could you have heard that cry of joy as she broke from her mother's hold, flew to the door, rushed into the hall, and traversed the space to the front entrance!

She was the first there. The tardy servant had scarcely emerged from her room, the parents and physician were still but half way, when the daughter undid the fastenings, and a sinewy form, furred to the chin, clasped her to its broad bosom, kissing her wildly, again and again. She clung to him, she gazed into his face, and then, for a moment, looking back at her parents, as if to say, "I knew it," fainted dead away.

IV.—SUNSHINE AFTER STORM.

What more we have to tell, may be told in few words. Few were the days before that fair face was as bright as ever, and that step once more like the step of a young fawn.

But she was never tired of listening how her lover, lost in the snow, had been found by some monks; how he had been with difficulty recovered, so that it was long before he could travel; and how, braving every danger, he had, as soon as able to leave his couch, set out to return, lest those at home might think him dead.

Early in spring there was, as you may know, a happy wedding, where the four good parents renewed, in the grateful sight, their own days of early love. And so let us leave them.

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The wind still howls around the house as we write; the reverie is over; the vision fled. But was it all a dream? Is the tale we have told as evanescent as will be the frost-work on the window by to-morrow's noon? Believe it not. For sometimes truth is stranger than fiction, and, as we thus sit, the past comes up to us and re-enacts itself in our reveries.

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THE THREE JONESES IN ONE BLOCK.
BY SMITH JONES, JR.
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pg. 266

THE THREE JONESES IN ONE BLOCK.

BY SMITH JONES, JR.

In one respect I am the most unfortunate of men. I live in a block, where there are two others of the same name, and am always, in consequence, being mistaken for them. The grocer sends in his bill to me, for things that some other Mr. Jones bought; the ward committee calls on me to "pay up" the subscription another Mr. Jones made; the doctor is forever knocking at my door when I am not sick, and the apothecary leaving villainous phials; and it would not surprise me, if, some day, the undertaker himself should march in, and, whether I will or not, clap me in a coffin ordered for a different and defunct Jones.

If the block was a large one, having some three-score houses in it, as respectable blocks in a great city ought to have, my sufferings, perhaps, would not be so overwhelming. But it is a small block, a very small block in fact; and, in addition, it is a most peculiar block. It is led off by a big, brown, ornate double house, like a corpulent militia colonel at the head of a petty squad. It has side-walks of stone flags, instead of a vulgar brick pavement. It is on a street that has high pretensions to gentility. That any Jones at all should be able to live in such a block is rather a tax on public credulity. But that three should domicile in it, all on the same side of the way, and all within half a dozen doors of each other, is what no one will believe. "Tell that to the horse marines," is the usual reply, even of the most polite, to what seems so preposterous an assertion.

Nor is this the worst of it. As if some malignant fate had presided over the whole affair, the Christian names of my two neighbors are almost as much alike as their surnames. I am Smith Jones, Jr., as an admiring world already knows—Smith Jones, Jr., written S. Jones, Jr., for short. My nearest neighbor Jones is Samuel Jones, Jr., for convenience called Sammy, and sometimes humorously Samivel, but invariably written S. Jones, Jr., also. The other Jones was baptised Sennacherib Jones, Jr., vulgarly called, in the block, Snatchcrab Jones the younger, and written likewise, *horrible dictu*, S. Jones, Jr. All our bills are made out alike to S. Jones, Jr., and generally sent in to me as the "oldest inhabitant" of the block. If one of my neighbors is sued, the summons comes to me. If my neighbor, the politician, offends the "sovereigns," they come and groan under my windows. If my other neighbor, the philanthropist, has promised aid to some one of his hobbies, the collecting committee, who are always sure to be ladies, call on me. And I have no doubt, if either was to get into difficulties—which I most devoutly pray may never happen—the sheriff would snap me up on a *capias* immediately.

To rehearse all my evils would tire the reader beyond patience. A solitary illustration will better suffice, I trust, to win me that compassion which I so well deserve. But first let me premise, that, in the hope of obviating the evil in a measure, I caused my name, "S. Jones, Jr.," to be engraved in large capital letters on my door. "Now," said I to myself, "as the others have no names on their door, they will be particular hereafter, not only in giving their exact number, but in stating that they are not the Jones who has a silver door-plate." Alas! never was the infirmity of human wisdom more plainly shown. But I must not anticipate.

Mrs. Jones, dear creature, has a weakness for canvass-back ducks. I mean, of course, Mrs. S. Jones, Jr., the wife of the writer, and not Mrs. Sammy Jones, Jr., nor Mrs. Snatchcrab Jones, Jr., though both, I have no doubt, are excellent ladies in their way. And in this liking for canvass-back ducks, done brown, and without currant jelly—for this last is important, as marking the difference between people who know how to eat and people who don't—I am, I confess, "flesh of one flesh and bone of one bone" with Mrs. Jones. A canvass-back, indeed, is our common failing. We like nothing better, or even as well, unless it is ourselves, always excepting the seven olive plants who flourish by our family hearth, but especially around our table.

Unluckily canvass-back ducks are dear, and, what is more, not always easy to get. Imagine my gratification—no! that is too weak a word—my unbounded delight, when, one morning lately, I saw, in the market, a pair of the plumpest, freshest, and altogether handsomest canvass-backs I had ever laid my eyes on. They were the first of the season also, which vastly increased their value. So eager was I to secure

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them, that I bought them at once, and without attempting to beat down their price, a thing I never before neglected in my life, and an oversight I would by no means recommend, especially to young housekeepers. I bought them, and ordering them to be sent, within an hour, to the direction which the poulterer took down at my bidding, I went joyously to my store.

The whole morning my head did little but run on the canvass-backs. "What will Mrs. Jones think," I said, "when she sees them come home?" If I had a check to draw, ten to one I drew it to the order of "Canvass, Back & Co." If I made an entry it was of six pieces of canvass-backs, instead of six pieces of de laine. A broker brought one of my own notes for me "to discount," as he said, "if in funds." I agreed mentally to do it, I remember, at so much off the face of it; but instead of saying "off the face," I said "off the canvass-backs." My mouth watered for those ducks as it used to for strawberries, when I was a boy, on the first day that we had that fruit for dinner. So entirely did they monopolize my thoughts, that, having to write to a correspondent in England, respecting a late importation, I concluded the letter, as I was afterward informed, by signing, "Yours, truly, Canvass Back."

Never, in my whole life, did the way home seem so long. I tried walking at first; but my progress was too lingering for my wishes: and so I hailed an omnibus. But how agonizingly slow the omnibus was! I thought the old women would never stop getting in and out; or that the driver would never be done making change; or that the nurses with children would never cease mistaking us for another coach and compelling us to halt for no purpose. At one place on the route we had to go out of the way for a whole block, the paviers being engaged in mending the street. But at last, though not till my patience was entirely exhausted, we drew up before my own door. With nervous haste I fumbled for my latch-key, and, after several ineffectual attempts —the result of my eagerness—finally succeeded in getting into the aperture. "Now," said I, exultingly, as the door opened, "for the canvass-backs:" and instinctively I dilated my nostrils, throwing my head up, to snuff the delicious odor.

But a far different fragrance met my olfactories than what I had expected. And here I must digress a moment to ask if any of my readers likes corned beef and cabbage? I don't wish to hurt their feelings, if they do, but I must nevertheless say, that, if there is anything edible I detest more than another, it is that dish. No doubt it is a very pleasant and digestible delicacy for some people. Ostriches like ten-penny nails, it is said; and I see no reason, therefore, why some people should not like corned beef and cabbage. But unfortunately I am not of that number. I have, in fact, a constitutional distaste to it. What assafœdita is to some men, that corned beef and cabbage is to me, but particularly the cabbage. The mere smell of it teaches me, as Yellowplush says, "what basins was made for." Imagine what effect the prospect of having to eat it, or go without dinner, had upon me.

For that was just my destiny, as I suspected immediately, and discovered to my entire satisfaction on rushing into the kitchen. Instead of beholding my canvass-backs done to a turn, as till that minute I had fondly expected, I saw a huge dish of corned beef with boiled cabbage, the odor of which was enough to knock me down.

And knock me down it did. Clasping both my hands on the lower part of my waistcoat, I uttered a cry of despair and fell back, just as Mrs. Jones, who had heard my latch-key, descended from the nursery above stairs.

"Jones," she began, "what, in the name of sense——"

But I had now recovered my power of speech. Horror, amazement and indignation, all combining, had burst the flood-gates of that momentary paralysis. I interrupted her sternly.

"Mrs. Jones!" I began.

As if struck dumb before a basilisk, she stopped at my commanding gesture, her mouth not even closing over her last word.

"Mrs. Jones," I cried, extending my arm majestically in the direction of the odious dish, and speaking in my most awful manner, "Mrs. Jones where are my canvass-backs?"

"Canvass-backs!" shrieked Mrs. Jones, after a second of thunder-struck silence. "What canvass-backs do you mean?" And then the suspicion flashing on her that I was jesting at her expense, she bridled up, answering sharply. "How dare you send home such a nasty, vulgar, sickening, beastly dish, and then come in to dinner asking," and here she mimicked my voice, "where's my canvass-backs?"

"My dear," cried I, in a calmer mood, for I saw there was cause for it on more accounts than one, "what do *you* mean? Certainly you got that pair of ducks I sent home?"

"No ducks have come to this house to-day," replied the dear creature, only half mollified.

"And that ——." I could not name the hateful dish, but pointed to it with marked aversion.

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"That," said she, also pointing, and emphasising the word, "was left here by the butcher, who said you had sent it home, and particularly wished it cooked for to-day's dinner."

A thought flashed across me.

"Did you look at the basket?" I said.

"No. The girl took the odious stuff out and carried the basket down cellar."

"A hundred to one its the basket of that Snatcherab Jones," I cried. "Snatch by name and snatch by nature," I added, lugubriously, with a melancholy attempt at a joke, "and my ducks, in that event, are swimming, before this, in his gullet."

"I never thought of that," answered my wife, in a gentle voice, mutely apologizing with her eyes. "Though how I could think, *dear* Jones, that you could send home such a dinner, and for the first time in thirteen happy years of married life, is beyond my comprehension. But I'll have the basket brought up at once."

The basket came and confirmed my suspicion. The ducks were irrevocably gone, for my neighbor dined two hours earlier than we did; and, to "make assurance doubly sure," on going to the back street, and looking out, we saw before his gate, where the servant threw her slops, the breast-bones, walkers, and other remains of two canvass-backs. They were polished, too, like ivory, showing what an excellent appetite my neighbor had. I made a free-will offering, on the spur of the moment, of the corned beef and cabbage, to the *manes* of the departed ducks, ordering the servant to throw it, plate and all, on top of the heap of bones.

I dined, that day, on some bits of cold meat, which had been laid away for the next beggar: but I'm afraid I wasn't half as thankful for them, as the poor fellow would have been.

What will be the next catastrophe, arising out of this triad of Joneses in one block, I dare not attempt to conjecture. Nothing worse can happen, however, than has already occurred, unless one of the other Mrs. Joneses should leave her husband, and the courts should divorce me instead of the real culprit. Or, unless Sammy Jones, or Snatcherab Jones, should advertise their wife, or wives, and the public should think it was dear, angelic Sarah Ann that had left my "bed and board."

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BORROWING FROM ECONOMY.
BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.
Peterson's Magazine (1849-1892); Dec 1853; VOL. XXIV., NO.6.; American Periodicals
pg. 269

BORROWING FROM ECONOMY.

BY HORATIO ALGER, JR.

THERE is a certain class of people, who, without intending or even being conscious of it, are a source of great trouble to their neighbors—I mean the class of habitual borrowers. Like all other habits this grows by exercise, and its growth is as imperceptible as it is rapid.

Mrs. Putnam was quietly seated at the fireside, examining with interest a new number of Peterson's Magazine which had just come to hand, when the door bell rang, and Mrs. Ruggles was announced. The latter was a fashionable lady—the wife of a successful merchant—with whose increasing income his wife's expenses found no difficulty in keeping pace.

Mrs. Ruggles was fond of literature at the expense of others, as the frequency with which she borrowed of her neighbors amply testified. She glanced at the book which Mrs. Putnam laid down at her entrance.

"A new number of Peterson," said she: "ah, that reminds me, my dear Mrs. Putnam, I haven't returned your last number yet. I am afraid you will not be willing to lend me another, for my little Charlie took it the other day just to look at the pictures, (you can't imagine how fond he is of them, the little dear: I expect he'll make an artist one of these days,) and was unlucky enough to tear the engravings out. I am very sorry indeed."

Mrs. Putnam looked a little grave, for she was intending to bind the numbers at the close of the volume. Politeness required her to say it was of no consequence, and she said it. It was not, however, without stretching her conscience a little, for she remembered that Mrs. Ruggles had borrowed the number in question before she had had time to read it through herself.

Mrs. Ruggles continued: "I am glad to think you don't care, for it emboldens me to make another request. I shall be at home this afternoon, with nothing to occupy me. Would you be kind enough to lend me the Magazine, and I will return it as soon as I have finished reading it?"

Mrs. Putnam had just commenced reading a story in which she was much interested, and she felt that Mrs. Ruggles had no right to make such a request.

"Pardon me, Mrs. Ruggles," she could not help saying, "but I am surprised that you do not subscribe for the Magazine. The price is but small, and it is much more comfortable to read anything of your own than to be forced to borrow. Then, at the end of the volume, you can have the numbers bound, which will give you a handsome book for your centre-table or library. I will lend you this number, however, if you wish it."

"I admit the truth of all you say," was the reply, "and I should like nothing better than to become a subscriber to Peterson, but the fact is that I have so many expenses of various kinds that I am obliged to practise economy, and forego many things which I should like."

The idea of her visitor's practising economy was so novel to Mrs. Putnam, whose husband possessed an income of less than one half that of Mr. Ruggles, that she could hardly forbear smiling. Politeness restrained her, and she said nothing.

Mrs. Ruggles soon proposed a shopping excursion, to which Mrs. Putnam assented.

"I am told," said the former, "that Lawson has just received a fine assortment of wrought collars. I don't think of purchasing, having more now than I can make use of, but I should like to examine them, and see whether they are really as good as they have been reported."

The ladies arrived at Lawson's in due time, and the lace collars were laid before them.

Mrs. Ruggles, who was always very enthusiastic in her likings, quite fell in love with one, the price of which was five dollars, and which, the shopman assured her, had not its equal in the city.

"Really," said she, "I cannot resist the temptation; such a love of a collar!" and she ordered it to be put up for her. She was about to leave the store, when the clerk arrested her attention.

"We have just received," said he, "some very superior lace veils, which it would afford me great pleasure to show you. I can assure you, you will be well repaid by the trouble of an examination."

Mrs. Ruggles' curiosity was aroused, and she eagerly acceded to the clerk's invitation.

She looked at them with a critical eye. They

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were really very beautiful, and Mrs. Ruggles, whose taste was exquisite, readily admitted it.

"What a beauty this is!" said she, calling the clerk's attention to one which she held in her hand. "What is the price?"

"Ten dollars," said he, "and not at all dear at that. You have, as I judged from your well known taste, selected the best article we have. Shall I not put it up for you?"

Mrs. Ruggles shook her head. She was flattered by the compliment paid to her taste, but even she shrank from the idea of giving ten dollars for what she could just as well do without.

"It is very beautiful, I admit," she said, "and I presume not dear for the quality, but I do not need it."

"It would be most becoming to you," persisted the clerk; "I showed it to Mrs. Stanley, this morning, and she was quite delighted with it. If you do not take it, I presume she will."

The clerk had, by accident, struck upon the right chord. Mrs. Stanley was, so to speak, a rival in matters of fashion with Mrs. Ruggles.

"Will you let me look at it once more?" said she.

Mrs. Ruggles' economical resolution did not stand the test of a second examination. The perseverance of the clerk was rewarded, and the veil transferred to Mrs. Ruggles.

As they left the store, Mrs. Putnam could not help calling to mind the declaration of Mrs. Ruggles a little while before, that she was obliged to use economy, and forego many things which she would like.

Mrs. Ruggles seeing her plunged in thought, inquired the subject of her reflections.

"Frankly," was the reply, "I was thinking that the money which you have just expended for articles which, by your own confession, you did not need, would pay the subscription to Peterson's Magazine seven times over. Now tell me, candidly, would you not derive more rational gratification from the latter than they will afford you?"

"I believe you are right," said Mrs. Ruggles, in a thoughtful tone, "and I am sorry I purchased the veil and collar, for I really do not need them. I will be more cautious hereafter, and, as the first step toward a reformation, I will send on a subscription for the Magazine this very afternoon."

Mrs. Ruggles kept her word, and henceforward Mrs. Putnam was allowed to enjoy the first reading of her Magazine. She bought a number to supply the place of that which little Charlie had spoiled, and was thus enabled to have the numbers bound at the end of the volume.

My dear reader, if you have patiently read this little sketch to its conclusion, you will see that it inculcates two things. First, *do not depend upon others for what you can procure yourself.* Secondly, *that it is not always economy which wears its semblance.*

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CHRISTMAS, "WITH VARIATIONS."
BY ELLA RODMAN.
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pg. 271

CHRISTMAS, "WITH VARIATIONS."

BY ELLA RODMAN.

A TEAR to the memory of that joyous season when we believed that birds were to be caught by throwing salt on their tails—when the existence of fairies seemed both possible and desirable—and when Christmas presents were supposed to be brought by a little, old man, who was

"——dressed all in fur from his head to his foot,
And his clothes were all tarnished with ashes and soot."

Why *must* all these delightful believings crumble and vanish as we reach the years of discretion, and the veil of mystery prove to be only a delusion? Who cares half as much about Christmas without Santa Claus? And how much more satisfaction there is in fishing up a present from the toe of a stocking, than to have it given in the usual matter-of-fact way? There is a sweet little poem which contains this verse:

"Oh, for that faith in story
With which my heart would glow
When I was nearer Heaven,
In the days of long ago!"

How distressing were the first incredulous thoughts that crept into our hearts! With what a sinking we admitted that the very doll which we had but just extricated from its stocking-chrysalis had beamed upon our optical organs from the window of the toy-shop around the corner! With what misgivings we opened letters from St. Nick, and felt indeed that where ignorance is bliss "'tis folly to be wise!" How like the death-knell of departed enjoyments rang the conviction, "There is no Santa Claus!" And then with what a feeling of angry shame we were laughed at for having ever been so foolish; and how some childish Columbus triumphed in the fact of having discovered it before!

Ah! that is a dreary day in childhood's calendar—whether, or not, as the almanacks say, there is "rain about this time"—when, disregarding even the new baby-house, with its chairs and tables, we betook ourselves to solitude, and mourned the non-existence of St. Nick as heartily as though he were a pet kitten just dead. *Our* dream was then over. On the next anniversary, with a still bleeding heart, we put forth our efforts to deceive "the children"—and by-and-bye we began to smile at the idea of ever having been deceived ourselves.

And yet there is something left. Although Santa Claus is nothing but a name, Christmas is Christmas still. The solemn beauty of Christmas Eve, when the pale moonbeams fall upon the crusted snow, thrills the heart with a sensation of awe; and even the tall, leafless trees, that stand there like sentinels, seem extending their arms to the world, and joining in the glad announcement that "A star has arisen in the East!"

If it is Christmas Eve in the country, there is the church to dress—delightful occupation! Seated in the vestry-room—living flowers in a bower of green—how the long wreaths grow beneath the nimble fingers, while young cheeks are flushing at the words and smiles that seem tenfold sweeter on Christmas Eve. Oh! those well-remembered days! when hands mysteriously came together over the Christmas wreaths—and "dressing the church" would have been only a story without a moral but for the supervision of certain active spirits, who took good care that the evening should not be "all for love."

At length, the making of wreaths is stopped, and in silent consternation the workers hear the dread word "enough"—for now the fun is at an end. There are some who could have gone on making Christmas wreaths forever. The wreaths are up, and all come to look.

In the corners of the pulpit tall boughs rest against the wall, and festoons of green hang from the desk and galleries. The mystical letters "I. H. S.," gleam darkly out from the front of the pulpit, and the small windows of stained glass throw a sombre light over the Christmas tokens. Then from the organ peals forth a joyous strain—and the light of the moonbeams without is resting on each heart.

The moonbeams played hide and seek among the dark angles of an old-fashioned house, that looked like a parent-nest to which young fledgelings, after trying the strength of their wings in the outer world, might return, with their flocks and herds, and find a warm welcome in its capacious bosom.

And it was just such a house.

In the drawing-room were assembled a merry

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Christmas party—married sons and daughters and cousins of every degree, some of whom had met for the first time in many years; and old memories would cause tear-drops to glitter in the eye even while a smile was dimpling the cheek.

The most conspicuous person in the circle around the fire was Dr. Hammersfield, a most gigantic M. D., but while his figure reminded one of the imperial lion, the expression of his face was that of a lamb. Not that the term "sheepish" was at all applicable, either; the doctor's face was a sort of kaleidescope, which displayed in different lights as many hues as a chameleon. The predominant expression was a mingling of fun and good-humor that was perfectly irresistible; and his well known wealth had nothing to do with the fact of his being a universal favorite.

Next to the doctor sat his wife; an elegant-looking woman, whose still lovely face had won his heart in early youth. There was a pleasant mingling of young and old and middle-aged; some were dancing—some were playing games—and others were dispersed around in groups.

There was a general gathering around the fire when the doctor proposed that all, who had any thing to tell, should either give extracts from their own personal history, on furnish amusing recitals borrowed from the experience of others. The proposition was eagerly acceded to; and the doctor, having been called upon to begin, cast a glance of inexpressible affection upon his wife, and gave them "My First Patient."

"When I was married I had scarcely sixpence in my pocket. But I was rich in anticipation—was I not J. S. Hammersfield, M. D., as my door-plate could testify? And were not patients to turn to me by some magical attraction, like that of the needle to the pole? And were not fees to drop in as thickly as the leaves in October? Of course they were! So I glanced hopefully about our two rooms, until they seemed to grow, in imagination, and become the stately dwelling that was to crown my success.

"You remember our little parlor, Ellen? Ah! I have often since thought that those were our happiest days. I can see the round table, with its crimson cover, and beautifully polished lamp—the plain, but cosy-looking window-curtains—and the old sofa, on which I have stretched during the long evenings, when fatigued by the day—and you are seated at your sewing, or kneeling beside me with your face uplifted to mine, discussing our visions for the future with all a child's faith in fairy tales. Ah! those were happy days!"

Here the doctor seemed wrapt in a silent retrospect of the past; but presently he continued, with a half sigh:

"Well, you will think that 'my first patient' is long in coming—but not, my dear friends, so long as the reality. Having provided and adorned my cage, I waited patiently for a bird to fly into it; but it did not prove as attractive as I expected. No one rushed hastily in to inquire for me—there were no violent rings at my bell in the dead of night—and I could attend the whole three Sunday services without the least fear of being called out of church.

"Time passed, and I was scant of patients in both senses of the word. I had bound up a sprained wrist for an old woman who was too poor to pay, and to whom I gave fifty cents on her departure—not exactly as a reward for coming, but because I thought that she needed it; and this was for some months nearly the extent of my medical practice. Butchers' and bakers' bills came in; and as I glanced at my neglected vials, I could not help wishing that they would take out the pay in rhubarb and calomel; but such a proposal would, doubtless, have ended in the cutting off of my supplies.

"I was almost in despair; and had just concluded to take down my sign and go to farming, when, like a criminal's reprieve at the last moment, arrived a messenger for Dr. Hammersfield. I needed no second bidding; had the man insisted upon binding my eyes, as in those stories of gold castles and deserted country-seats, I would have offered no objection; there was in 'my first patient' a peculiar charm that sounded like a trumpet call to the field of battle—I was to go forth and distinguish myself.

"Following with alacrity in the wake of my guide, I soon found myself in a well enough-looking apartment, whose occupant lay tossing upon the couch in all the restlessness of fever. He was a fine-looking man, with an intellectual brow, and large, dreamy eyes that were now glaring upon me in the wildness of delirium. In the room was a musical instrument, some books, and several items that indicated a refined mind. He boarded with the people who had sent for me; and from what I saw, I soon decided that my patient was a man of property and education—in short, he was to be the stepping-stone to all the grandeur I had pictured.

"In the evenings my wife and I sat talking and conjecturing; my fee would soon be forthcoming, for the patient improved rapidly, and in imagination it was already spent. Indeed, we had laid it out in a variety of ways; for in *those* days we were obliged to consider what was

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wanted *most* before parting with so slippery a thing as money.

"Well, the days wore on, and the sick man became convalescent. His gratitude to me was unbounded.

"'Doctor,' said he, one morning, 'I owe my life to you, and would do anything for you in return—but I am afraid that I can only pay you professionally.'

"How my hopes fell at this announcement! Ready money was so much more desirable than any other way of remuneration—but perhaps this might prove better than anything, I inquired the nature of his 'profession.'

"'It is,' said he, 'pointing to his instrument, that of *a violin player.*'

"In spite of my disappointment, I laughed—I really could not help it; an uncontrollable fit of merriment seized me on the spot, and I laughed until the tears stood in my eyes. The air with which my patient pointed to his violin would have told well on the stage—and then the idea of calling it *a profession!* He had given

"'——to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.'

"'Music has charms to soothe a savage.' I forget whether 'ear' or 'breast,' but it has *not* power to put bread into hungry mouths; and my patient was rather surprised at the lack of enthusiasm I manifested for the noble art. He was a good-natured fellow, and expressed so much regret at his inability to satisfy my expectations, that I smilingly accepted half a dozen of his concert tickets, and concluded that Ellen and I might as well enjoy an amusement that cost us nothing.

"By-and-bye the concerts ceased; and my musical patient expressed a desire that I would take out the rest of the debt in serenades. This seemed rather unsubstantial, to be sure, but I complied; and many a time have Ellen and I sat at the window, in the moonlight, watching the manœuvres of a maiden lady over the way, who evidently considered the music her own especial property.

"But one chilly night the lady took cold, and I was summoned in to her relief. So that, after all, you see that the violin player was really the cause of my advancement; for no sooner had Miss Briggs arrived at a state of convalescence than my fame spread abroad, and patients flocked in from all quarters. And now, ladies and gentlemen, I have risen like a Phœnix from the ashes."

As the doctor pronounced these words, he gradually rose to his feet; and his tall figure seemed towering up into a lofty column, like a genii from his copper vessel. All laughed at his lordly air; and seating himself in the position of a listener, he called upon his next neighbor, Mr. Chester, for a recital.

"No one," said Mr. Chester, "can accuse me of having married Mrs. Chester for anything save her own sweet self, alone; for on the day of our first meeting, she had very little superfluous clothing about her. She had no shoes or stockings—her hat was not worth mentioning—and her scarf, if she ever possessed any, had taken to itself wings and flown away."

"Now, Mr. Chester!" exclaimed his wife, "this is really too bad!"

"Not at all, my dear—though now I do remember me of some 'airy nothing' that prevented the breezes from visiting you too roughly."

"Ladies and gentlemen," said Mrs. Chester, "for fear of your putting a wrong construction upon his words, I beg leave to mention, that I had all my proper accoutrements, with the exception of my shoes and stockings, which I had taken off for the purpose of wading."

"The fact, my dear friends, is simply this," continued Mr. Chester, "I had gone, with some friends, to a lonely country place that was quite celebrated for its fishing facilities; and on a lovely afternoon in June we set forth across the beautiful pond that was to furnish the wherewith for our suppers.

"In the middle of this pond there was a large rock; and seated on the rock, we beheld a slight figure upon whose sex we had some difficulty in determining. Indeed, we didn't know but that it might be our good fortune to capture a mermaid. Our old geographies tell us that 'the monkey is the connecting link between man and beast;' the figure before us appeared to be an indescribable something between girl and boy. On her head was a boy's straw hat, ornamented with a wreath of water-lilies—her feet were entirely bare, and thrust into the water—and her expression seemed to say that she could never be surprised enough at her position. For a description of her features, 'see frontispiece.'

"As we steered our course toward this modern Undine, she looked quite ready to sink into the ground, if there had been any—but she had evidently not decided upon a plunge into the water. With some difficulty, we persuaded the distressed damsel into our boat; and there learned a story of 'wrongs and desertion' that put vigor enough in our arms to—row her to the shore.

"There we found two wicked sprites of country

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cousins, who had deluded the city-bred visitor into their boat, and then landed her high and dry upon the rock, under a false pretence of leaving her sojourn there entirely at her own option. She thanked us with an agitated voice. Had it not been for our timely aid, she trembled to think of her probable fate? Possibly some rough countryman, whose whole soul was absorbed in 'a mess of crabs,' and whose boat was polluted with the presence of oysters, and other shelly abominations, would have offered the aid it had been *our* glorious privilege to bestow, and conveyed her in quiet obscurity to the cosy farm house which now presented itself to our view!"

"I am sure that I said nothing of the kind!" exclaimed Mrs. Chester, joining in the laugh which this description raised.

"No," replied her husband, "but there is a silent kind of woe, where words are useless, and your look spoke all sorts of horrors. We forgot all about the fishing, and spent the evening at the farm-house.

"The next day, I was obliged, of course, to call and inquire after Miss Undine's health; and I lingered, fascinated, like the knight at the fisherman's cottage. The cousins were in disgrace, for she had vowed *never* to forgive them; and they really appeared quite penitent.

"Had any fortune-teller said to me, before leaving home, 'you will find your future wife seated, half dressed, upon a rock in the water,' I should have been quite as much amused as was Agil, in the Arabian Nights, when told by the young man that he was his predestined murderer. And yet so it was. I met with the fate of the poor fish whose capture I had meditated; and after a few ineffectual struggles, found myself landed upon the shore of matrimony. I would say to young men, in a friendly way, 'beware of *fishing!*' but, alas! who can tell in what form the dangers may lurk?'"

"By-the-bye," said one of the culprit cousins, who was seated next to Mrs. Chester, "have you *ever* forgiven us, Matilda? I really trembled before your rage."

"Yes," she softly whispered, "*I forgave you one moonlight night, as I stood in the old orchard!*"

Low as had been the whisper, her husband heard it, and his smile spoke eloquently for the thoughts her words had awakened.

"Now," said the doctor, "who else 'can a tale unfold?'"

Scarcely had he pronounced these words ere the door opened, and Mr. Ormsby, the clergyman, entered. A warm welcome instantly greeted him from the master of the house, by whom he had been invited to join the Christmas party; and the circle around the fire made room for him with respectful alacrity. His appearance presented quite a contrast to that of the merry party assembled. Small particles of snow, that were rapidly melting on his boots before the warm influence of the cheering blaze, showed that he had been wandering in some bye-road, where his own footsteps had probably made the first path. His face was blue with the cold; and his coat was buttoned closely around him, as though he had prepared himself to endure. His sudden appearance threw a momentary quiet over the whole party; and he, himself, sat absorbed in the contemplation of a solemn scene he had just witnessed.

"My friends," said he, at length, "may I be permitted to add my story to the recital, which, I doubt not, are more suited to the merry thoughts of Christmas Eve? There are many varied scenes enacted on the eve of this gay festival; and I would remind you that while to us come the light and the blessings, to others is 'darkness and the shadow of death.'"

The merry party were instantly subdued; and listening in respectful attention, they waited for Mr. Ormsby's narrative.

"Some distance from here," said he, "surrounded by trackless snow, there is a small cabin that stands by itself, lonely and isolated. In summer a thick grove on one side imparts an air of quiet beauty to the humble dwelling; but when the trees are bare and leafless, it is indeed a dreary spot.

"In this cabin a lonely mother has watched and waited for the return of a son who was to her the one bark freighted with all her earthly hopes. For long years she lived a lonely woman —far removed from those whom birth and education entitled her to call her equals—living on in her lonely dwelling with the one hope clinging about her heart, and buoying her up above the sorrows that encompassed her weary lot.

"In earlier years she had toiled beyond her strength to educate the boy who alone remained to remind her that life was not *all* desolate; and he grew to the years of manhood with his own wild dreams cherished and strengthened by his mother's counsels. He was to achieve a triumph of Fate; his name was to be enrolled in the annals of Fame—and wealth and honors were to compensate the two world-abandoned ones for all their deprivations.

"I have listened to such recitals from that mother's lips—and her excited manner and kindly eye fully proclaimed her faith in the fulfilment of these extravagant visions. The

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realization of this one dream constituted her only hope for the future. *It was the boy's religion.* It had fled his mind from his earliest infancy; and he had grown to manhood with that one thought still uppermost in his heart. As the mother gazed upon the pale and silent boy, whom the sports of youth failed to allure, and marked the slight hand that held the pencil, she hailed with delight these evidences of the soul-absorbing genius that was slowly consuming the springs of life For he *had* talent; his mother has shown me sketches and pictures that would not have disgraced the first efforts of Titian or Da Vinci—but, alas! he had neither money nor friends, and without these unprotected genius may struggle in vain against the rough blasts of the world.

"Years ago, she had sent her son from her; he had gone to the old world to compare with his the works of the old masters, and catch from the glowing sky of Italy the inspiration that has rendered them immortal. And then the lonely mother came to the humble cabin; and there she waited and watched for him whose return was to open a new life to both.

"Her son's letters had spoken of a painting on which he was engaged, that would probably achieve a triumph at the exhibition that was soon to take place; and the poor mother lifted her head proudly from the precious paper, as she said,

"'He will return on Christmas Eve.'

"'And why on Christmas Eve?' I asked, for her tone was that of one who had some private reason for making the assertion.

"Her eye kindled with a strange fire as she answered, 'You have often spoken to me of that goodness which showers benefits on the poor as well as the rich—the good and the bad alike—think you that *I* shall *always* be forgotten? *He will return on Christmas Eve.*'

"Many times had she repeated this with a defiant air; and I half trembled as I pictured Christmas Eve at the widow's cottage.

"This evening, I had just buttoned my overcoat in the hall, to set forth on my pilgrimage hither, when a messenger arrived from the widow, who requested my presence at the cabin. The man was an illiterate countryman, and I asked him no questions, but pursued my lonely way in silence—almost forgetful that he was beside me. The houses that I passed sent forth bright gleams to welcome the Christmas Eve; and the sound of sleigh-bells broke on the air as though in mockery of all gloomy thoughts.

"But as I approached the cabin, the houses were fewer and more humble in appearance, and the road dreary and unfrequented. Trackless snow-drifts blocked up the way; and I arrived at the cabin cold and weary. A single light burned in the widow's apartment, and with a foreboding heart I knocked at the door.

"It was opened by the lonely occupant, but her face was turned from me; and in silence she led the way to a couch, where reclined the emaciated figure of her son. He *had* returned on Christmas Eve—but *it was to die.* She sank beneath the stroke, and covered her face with her hands in speechless agony.

"Opening his large, dark eyes, which had been closed from extreme exhaustion, the young artist softly whispered, "'Tis true, dear mother, that I have lost the Fame so long pursued—but I have gained what is of far more value. *You never taught me that,* mother—or it had been better for us both.'

"A deep sigh burst from the depths of her heavy heart, and I turned aside to hide the tears I could not control—for 'he was the only son of his mother, and she was a widow.'"

Several of the company, much affected, expressed their intention of visiting the widow's cabin after the Christmas service. Mr. Ormsby shook his head sadly.

"The wanderer," said he, "has now a home on high—but the poor, lonely mother may, perhaps, be softened by friendly sympathy."

A party was instantly organized to visit the cabin to-morrow; and subdued by the picture of actual grief which had been thus vividly brought before them, they sat quietly dwelling on the contrast between their own lot and that of the poor widow.

The fair, pale moon looked brightly through the old-fashioned window at the head of the staircase-landing; and young hearts paused on that Christmas Eve, and looked dreamily out on the stillness, ere they went to the slumber from which they would awaken to a glorious morrow.

And maidens dwelt fondly on the tones of the magic "good night" that had greeted them from lips beloved; and mothers thought of their sleeping cherubs, wrapt in innocent dreams of Santa Claus; and old people remembered the Christmas Eves that had passed like a fleeting vision.

And the moon shone down on the cold, still features of the *dead*—and the moonbeams played idly with the scattered locks a *mother's* hand had so often caressed, and mocked the dull place with their unwelcome light.

Hundreds of years ago, they had bathed the earth in a silver flood, when came the glad tidings, "A star has arisen in the East!"

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ELIZA GREEN'S WEDDING.
BY MARY M. MEANY.
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ELIZA GREEN'S WEDDING.

BY MARY L. MEANY.

"Did you hear that Eliza Green is soon to be married?" inquired one of two ladies who were making a morning call on their friend, Mrs. Minley.

"No. I understood that the marriage was not to take place for some time," was the reply.

"So it was rumored; but I met Eliza, yesterday, while shopping, and ascertained that it is to be on next Thursday week. I went with her to select her purchases: a beautiful light silk for a bridal dress.

"Is it possible?" interrupted Mrs. Minley, in a tone of surprise.

"Yes; and a very handsome cashmere; beside crimson merino for a travelling dress, to be trimmed with black velvet."

"They are going on a journey, then?"

"Oh, I suppose only to see Robert's people, who, you know, live at some distance: but you seem surprised, Mrs. Minley?"

"I am, indeed, surprised to hear of Eliza Green having made such purchases. They are quite unsuited both to her present condition and that in prospect."

"I do not think so; she is to have a wedding party, and, of course, needs a handsome wedding dress; and, for the others, she would not like to go, without something new and fashionable, among her new relations."

"Who are, I believe, plain, old-fashioned country people," rejoined Mrs. Minley, with a smile, "to whom novelty and fashion are things of no consequence."

"Well, I thought her very economical," persisted Miss Hardin. "I wished her to choose a pretty bridal dress, but she said the silk which she was obliged to have, would answer for that occasion; and I could not persuade her to the contrary, though I tried my best."

"Very inconsiderate in you, Frances," replied her companion, Mrs. Ridgeway. "A handsome light silk will be as suitable for her wedding night as white satin and blond, on which I know your thoughts are bent."

"Far more so, I think," chimed in Mrs. Minley.

"Why, what is the matter with you both this morning? One would imagine your leige lords had been reading you impressive lectures on economy," said Miss Hardin, laughing, though evidently not well pleased. "However, I did not propose to Eliza to get satin or blond; a pretty Swiss or mull looks very well, for a bridal dress, far better, to my taste, than a colored silk, although *that* is necessary afterward. Jane Carpenter wore a beautifully embroidered robe the night she was married, and indeed her purchases were far more extravagant than Eliza's; yet I have never heard you speak so of *her*, Mrs. Minley."

"You do not consider the difference in the two cases, my dear Frances," replied Mrs. Minley, seriously. "Mr. Carpenter has been doing a good business for many years, and Jane as an only child has been always indulged as much as possible; so that it was no wonder he thought proper to give a large party on occasion of her marriage, nor that she should be, as you say, somewhat extravagant in her expenditure. Eliza on the other hand is but one of a large family, and her father only partner in a manufacturing establishment, which, if it were all in his own hands, would not enable him to maintain his family in the style to which the Carpenters have been accustomed. Neither is there anything more encouraging in Eliza's future prospects. As clerk in one of our retail stores Mr. Bird's salary must be trifling."

"Only three hundred dollars a year, I believe. Jane's husband, on the contrary, has a large salary in one of the extensive firms of ——. Can you not perceive the difference in the circumstances of your two friends, Frances; and that what is wilful, unauthorized extravagance in the one, is natural and proper in the other?"

"None are so blind as those who will not see," replied the young lady, gaily, as she rose to take leave. "There is to be a very nice wedding—about twenty persons will be invited, Eliza told me—and I always maintain that a bride should look as well as possible before so many people."

"How strange Mrs. Minley is," she resumed, when once more in the street with Mrs. Ridgeway. "To think of her criticizing poor Eliza in such a strain. It is only proper in Mr. Green to give her two or three handsome dresses, the last he will have to purchase for her: and she has as much right to them and to a wedding party, too;

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as Jane Carpenter had. I was almost angry with you for taking part with her."

"I know very little of the parties concerned," replied Mrs. Ridgeway, as she paused at a corner from which diverged their paths homeward, "but it struck me that Mrs. Minley was more than half right."

And Mrs. Minley *was* more than half right; she was altogether right in her views.

The wedding night came in due time, and everything passed off pleasantly. The bride looked very sweetly in her delicate silk; the supper was by general consent pronounced excellent; and the younger members of the family, who, as some one maliciously observed, were wild with delight at finding themselves so handsomely attired, added much by their innocent mirthfulness to the joy of the occasion. Mr. and Mrs. Green dispensed their hospitalities pleasantly, and if an occasional shade of gravity was for a moment visible in either, surely that was natural on an occasion that separated their eldest child in name and fortune from them.

The following morning the young pair set out for the distant farm, where dwelt in humble and peaceful tranquillity the aged parents of the groom. "The crimson merino travelling dress trimmed with black velvet," of course received a due share of notice in the various conversations for which the wedding furnished a fruitful theme during days succeeding. Most persons concurred in censuring the whole affair as shamefully extravagant, particularly as Mr. Green's embarrassed circumstances were generally known to the towns-people. Severe losses had been sustained by the manufactory during the previous year, and with the increased expenditure incident to his daughter going into company, he had found it extremely difficult to provide for his large family, and the rent of his comfortable dwelling house necessarily remained unpaid. But hoping for "better times," and calculating on a great reduction in household expenses after the departure of his daughter, and the eldest son, who was now apprenticed to a tradesman in a neighboring town, Mr. Green had felt but little uneasiness respecting the rent; especially as the landlord was an old acquaintance, who readily received his apologies for non-payment, and professed himself willing to wait till a more propitious season.

Now, however, indignant at the reports and Mr. Abell to wait his convenience; while, to increase his perplexity, the dry-goods merchant and others to whom of late he had become indebted, having an inkling of his embarrassments, presented their bills and pressed for immediate payment. His partner, who had long desired to have the manufactory in his own hands, listened coldly to the distressed man's account of his situation; but generously offered to buy him out as the only means *he* could devise of freeing him from his difficulties. This proposal, bitter as it was to Mr. Green, he felt at length compelled to accept. With a heavy heart he transferred his share of the business at a sacrifice to his grasping partner; and on the very day his daughter returned in high spirits from her wedding trip, her father entered as workman the establishment in which the best years of his life had been spent as master; crushed and broken in spirit; not more by the change in his condition and the prospect of ceaseless toil, than by the consciousness of his inability to provide for his large family by daily labor at his advanced age.

"What a sad termination to Eliza's wedding festivities!" said Mrs. Minley, when on next meeting with Miss Hardin, the misfortunes of Mr. Green were duly commented on. "If, as I have heard, she prevailed on her father against his better judgment to incur the expenses which have brought him into this trouble, how must the thoughtless girl now suffer from her own reproachful feelings."

"Eliza was not aware that her father's means were so very limited," replied Miss Hardin; "and I cannot see why she or her parents should have any cause for self-upbraiding. It was all the fault of that old Abell, the miserly, unfeeling man! I always thought him covetous and selfish; but I could not have deemed him capable of an act so utterly contemptible and heartless."

"Mr. Abell only acted as most others in his situation would have done," returned Mrs. Minley, smiling at her young friend's vehemence. "He showed indeed neither generosity nor magnanimity toward his unfortunate tenant, but these virtues, Frances, are seldom exhibited in the dealings between debtor and creditor. Nor do I think that he is altogether to blame in this matter. If Mr. Abell's conduct was contemptible and heartless, Mr. Green's was certainly rash and imprudent. You remember the remark of that shrewd observer of human nature, Franklin, in his advice to mechanics:—'The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or at nine at night, heard by a creditor, makes him easy six months longer; but if he sees you at a billiard-table, or hears your voice in a tavern, when you

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should be at work, he sends for his money the next day.' The justice of this observation every day's experience confirms. There are few creditors who will not extend some indulgence to those whom they see to be frugal, industrious and persevering; but when they find them needlessly incurring new debts, and rushing into expenses which even their best friends must deem unjustifiable, though in other respects their conduct be admirable, it is scarcely wonderful that the indignant creditors should withdraw the leniency that has been so much abused."

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A PHYSICIAN'S STORY.
BY E. W. DEWEES.
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A PHYSICIAN'S STORY.

BY E. W. DEWEES.

I HAD been many years successfully established in practice in Cincinnati, and was no longer a young man, when one day pausing with a foot on the steps of my carriage to read a letter my servant had placed in my hand, I chanced to overhear the conversation of some young men who were loitering near where I stood.

They were commenting in extravagant terms on a young lady who was approaching. She was superb—queenly—glorious, if one might believe the encomiums of her admirers. My curiosity somewhat roused, I glanced up, and beheld, as I thought then, and think still, the handsomest woman I had ever seen. Her appearance was as majestic as it was beautiful; yet, as she returned the gentlemen's salutations, a sweet, and gracious smile spoke of as much gentleness as pride of character.

I recognized her as the much admired Miss Madeline C——, who, with her mother, had but recently taken up her residence in our city.

When she had passed, I endeavored to resume the reading of my letter; but again the conversation of my talkative neighbors attracted my attention.

"I'll tell you what it is, Fred," cried one, "all conquering as you are, you'd not find success such a certain thing in *that* quarter."

"No?" carelessly asked the young gentleman addressed, a man of remarkable personal beauty —"I'm rather incredulous of these invincible women, myself."

"They say Miss Madeline has already refused many excellent offers; and I fancy, with *her*, you would fare no better than the others, notwithstanding your fortune, unless you chanced to strike her fancy."

"The probability is that I *should* strike her fancy," returned Fred Thornton, coolly, yawning as he spoke.

"I lay you a bet of a hundred dollars that you do not win her," retorted his companion.

"Done," said Thornton, and further I heard not, for becoming conscious of the impropriety of so long playing eaves-dropper, I stepped into my carriage, and thought no more of the matter.

About six months from that time I was summoned professionally to the house of Mrs. C——. On arriving there, I found my patient to be the same young lady who had been the subject of the above conversation. She was greatly changed, but if possible more lovely than ever. Her brilliant complexion had faded to purest white, scarcely tinged with the rose; her large, blue eyes were clear, indeed, but languid and heavy; she complained of constant headache, and general weakness, while her whole appearance wore such an air of hopeless apathy, that I should have had no hesitation in attributing her illness to some secret grief, had not every happiness seemed to surround her.

She was understood to be engaged to be married to a most excellent young man, Mr. Charles Leman; kind friends surrounded, a doting mother was devoted to her; rich, and so very beautiful, I could imagine no cause for any sorrow, and was completely puzzled.

The preparations were already going on for her wedding, which if Madeline's health permitted, was to take place in two months. It crossed my mind as a passing thought, that Fred Thornton had lost his wager, and I confess the idea gave me pleasure, for the young man's vanity had not pleased me.

I visited my patient daily, and soon became intensely interested in her—nay, more, I grew extremely fond of her; for indeed I have never seen any one so capable of attaching all who surrounded her—her's was truly a tender and noble character. I felt the pitying tenderness of a father, for the poor suffering child, and naturally manifested the affection I felt for her, in a thousand little ways. My visits to her absorbed an undue proportion of my time—I seldom came without bringing her some token, proving that my thoughts had been occupied with her during my absence—a flower—a bunch of grapes, or a book; sometimes too, I took her short drives into the country with me, hoping to divert and amuse her.

Madeline understood the sincerity of the affection I always manifested for her, and ere long returned it with all the generous warmth of her nature.

Notwithstanding all my endeavors, however, I found with concern, that I was doing nothing for my patient. She grew daily more pale and delicate. The exertion that she was equal to

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one week, was too much for her the next. I became satisfied some mental trouble must be at the root of the evil, and conjectured that some misunderstanding between her and her lover might be the cause. I determined to watch them narrowly.

A few days later I had an opportunity of seeing them together. Mr. Leman entered the room during my visit, bearing in his arms two immense volumes of rare engravings, which he designed as a present to his mistress, knowing her fondness for works of art. His manly face was radiant with pleasure as he saw Madeline's gratification at his gift, and he proceeded in an animated manner to explain to her how he had been so fortunate as to meet with the work in question, which he said he had heard her praise several months previously. Madeline thanked him for his kindness by a grateful look, and held out her hand to him; but when he took it eagerly, and would have kissed it, she shrank visibly, and grew pale as death—I placed my fingers carelessly on my patient's pulse, and found it beating nervously and agitatedly.

"She does not love him," I said to myself, and fancied I was now at the bottom of Madeline's heart.

On calling the following day, the servant, as I imagine, showed me to my patient's room without announcing me as usual. On entering I saw her with her head buried in her arms, which rested on a table before her. Unaware of my vicinity, she was indulging in a violent fit of weeping. I approached her, and laying my hand gently on her shoulder, said with emotion,

"Madeline, my poor child, my heart aches for you."

She looked up, and with a voice and look of agony cried,

"Oh, doctor, it is killing me."

I sat down beside her, and drawing her to me, said,

"My child, it is indeed killing you, this sorrow of yours which you are too proud to reveal. I think, Madeline, you know I love you—if you were my own daughter you could not be more dear; come, confide in me—it will not be difficult, for I fancy I already half guess your secret—you do not love Mr. Leman."

"That is not all," said Madeline, greatly agitated, and breaking from me, she walked up and down the room, wringing her hands despairingly.

"My child, be calm—do not agitate yourself thus, or I shall fear for your life."

"Life," she cried, bitterly, pausing as she spoke—"what charms do you think life has for a woman of any sensibility, who is about to bestow her hand on one man, while her whole heart and soul are given to another?"

I drew the excited girl to the seat beside me, and after a time succeeded in quieting her agitation so far that she was able to give me a connected account of her story.

It appeared that this same Fred Thornton, whose wager to win Miss C——'s affections some months before I had accidentally overheard, had immediately afterward sought her society, and paid her the most marked attentions.

Young Thornton was handsome, most attractive in his manners—his mind was well cultivated, and he was not without some good qualities, which he knew well how to display, while his more unamiable traits of selfishness, vanity and want of principle, he as well understood how to conceal.

Madeline, of course, never doubting the sincerity of his unusually pressing attentions, and believing herself ardently beloved, gradually yielded up her whole heart to him. It was not till it was too late for her to recall her affections, that some officious friend came to her with the story of the wager.

Naturally extremely proud and sensitive, Madeline was hurt to the quick, at the idea of having been made the subject of a vulgar bet by the man she loved. The thought that the love she was cherishing in the "innermost shrine of her heart," had been merely esteemed a light trifling thing—the subject of a wager—that feelings she had trembled even to analyze, were already known and talked of by half the town—all this was torture to her. Worse than all, was the conviction which forced itself upon her, of the unworthiness of the man who could be guilty of such conduct. Still the story might not be true. Should he deny it, not all the world should make her believe it.

When her lover came to her the next day, the words Madeline had long expected were spoken. Thornton declared his love, and offered her his hand. Madeline heard him, and then with what calmness she could, informed him of her knowledge of his wager—entreated him to deny it if he could, and finding him convicted by his silence, ended by saying,

"Farewell then, forever, Mr. Thornton. Whatever it may cost me, I thank God that he has saved me from uniting myself to one capable of the cruelty and heartlessness of making one innocent girl's affections the subject of a wager."

In vain Thornton eagerly protested that however faulty at first, his heart was now really and entirely her's, and urged his suit with all the eloquence of passion; Madeline was firm. Thornton

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at last losing his temper, proceeded in words of rude violence to accuse her of having lured him on with seeming encouragement, in order to punish him finally by a mortifying refusal. This unjust and ungenerous accusation pained Madeline extremely, and when the agitating interview was over, her strength all gone, she fell into a long, fainting fit, from which her friends feared she would never wake. This swoon was but the first open sign, that the cruel trial she had passed had broken her heart and undermined her health.

Mr. Thornton left the city immediately, and shortly afterward an old and faithful admirer of Madeline's once more made her an offer of his hand. She would have unhesitatingly declined it, but her mother's entreaties, joined to those of Mr. Leman induced her to waver. She confided to Mr. Leman the state of her heart, assured him of her determination never to marry Mr. Thornton, but also of her resolution never to unite herself to any man, unless her heart went with her hand. She told him she considered it her duty to struggle with, and if possible to conquer her unfortunate attachment; if he were willing to wait and abide the result he might do so. I believe at the time the poor girl was not without hopes of overcoming her ill-placed love; but she over-rated her strength. Mr. Leman was satisfied. He loved so truly, that he was willing to accept, for a time, the second place in the heart where he hoped, one day, to gain the first.

But Madeline's over anxious mother, and the world, chose to consider her connexion with Mr. Leman in the light of an engagement; and she felt all the unhappiness of the position into which she was forced—the betrothed wife of one man, while unable to conquer the love for another.

Madeline concluded her confession with bursting tears, saying,

"I was very proud, doctor; I do not know that I repent it, but it has cost me my life."

"Do not say so, my child," I said, trying to soothe her, "my art may do wonders now that I know all;" and after waiting till she was again calm, I left her recommending quiet.

On my return home, I immediately wrote to Mr. Thornton. I had become convinced that my only hope of saving my patient, was in the chance of a change for the better resulting from seeing him once more. I informed Mr. Thornton of the state of Madeline's health; coldly, but frankly, told him my reason for sending for him, and desired him to lose no time.

On visiting my patient next day I found her much worse than usual. She had had a long conference with Mr. Leman after I had left her, and having confessed to him her inability to conquer her first attachment, begged his consent to the dissolution of all ties between them.

Mr. Leman, with true love and generosity, acceded unhesitatingly to her wishes, even attempting to conceal the deep disappointment her decision cost him.

This exciting interview, in addition to the one she had had with me, had been altogether too much for my poor Madeline's strength. She was evidently beginning to sink.

With a bursting heart I exerted all my skill to revive her; she followed my directions, smiled on me kindly, but shook her head significantly. On Mr. Leman, who sat beside her couch, she looked now and then with such glances of gratitude and confiding trust, that I saw the poor fellow could scarcely bear it. Her mother, greatly alarmed, sat on the other side holding her daughter's hand, and seeking my face with those questioning, despairing looks, which every physician knows so well, and finds it so hard to meet. Unable to control my feelings I was obliged to leave the house.

Many times that day, and the next, I was beside my gentle patient, and saw no change excepting increasing weakness, which was in itself a most alarming symptom. My only hope was now in Thornton's speedy arrival. To see him once more—to know that he still loved, if anything could rouse her and enable her to rally her strength, it would be this. I was in Madeline's room, when the bell rang and afterward a distant step was faintly heard in the hall.

Madeline, who knew nothing of my letter, raised her head from her pillow, and said to me calmly,

"Doctor, that is Mr. Thornton; bring him here at once."

I obeyed.

Thornton entered the room, and overcome by the sight of the dying girl, sank on his knees by her side, bursting into a passion of grief.

Madeline gave him her hand—Mr. Leman already held the other. I stood with her mother at the foot of her couch, looking with eyes full of tears at a sight strange as it was touching.

Madeline, calm and beautiful as an angel, lay between the two men who both loved her, (but oh, how differently) holding a hand of each, her serene, heavenly face contrasting forcibly with the agitated countenances on either side. Her eyes were closed for a moment, as if she were collecting all her strength. A change had indeed taken place in Madeline at again seeing her lover; but, alas! it was not for the better. The distress I felt, she must have seen in my face

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on unclosing her eyes, for she motioned me to approach, and whispered in my ear,

"Do not grieve, dearest doctor, that you could not save me for a wretched life. For a woman who has misplaced her love there is but one fate."

She paused, and then said aloud,

"Yes, Frederic, you I have loved—love still; but you, Charles," and she turned her eyes gratefully upon him, "you have *deserved* my love. To you I leave the task of comforting my mother."

The sweet, low voice ceased; a heavenly serenity rested on the lovely face; and by the superhuman sweetness of the smile that settled round her mouth, we knew that our poor Madeline's sorrows were over, and her joys begun.

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"KEEPING UP APPEARANCES."
BY ELLEN ASHTON.
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"KEEPING UP APPEARANCES."

BY ELLEN ASHTON.

The Bentleys were famous for "keeping up appearances." They lived in a handsome house at the fashionable end of the town; had costly rose-wood furniture and velvet carpets; went to Saratoga, Cape May, or Newport every summer; and lived altogether in a style that entitled them to be considered among the "best society," at least so far as spending money is concerned. Yet it was a wonder to more than one person how Mr. Bentley managed to afford all this, for his business was known not to be very good, and was suspected of being actually indifferent.

The Bentleys had risen, as the phrase goes, "from nothing." This would have been no objection to them, if they had been people of real worth—people of correct principles, good taste, cultivated minds and elegant behavior. But the Bentleys were as vulgar as they were ignorant, and as ignorant as they were false. The paste diamonds which Mrs. Bentley sometimes wore, and which deceived her whole circle of fashionable friends, were a type of herself, her daughters and her husband. The existence of the family consisted, in fact, in substituting glitter for gold, in a word "in keeping up appearances." For they not only lived as if they had twice the income they really had, but they pretended to be connoisseurs in music and the arts: and as the set among whom they moved had plenty of people as ignorant as themselves, this game of deception succeeded better than might have been thought. Sometimes, however, those who were better informed, had occasion to laugh in secret at the absurdities the Bentleys committed. "Your wife is a fashionable woman," said an acquaintance to Mr. Bentley. "Why don't she have a *dejeuner?* They're all the rage." "Oh!" answered the husband, ignorant of what a *dejeuner* was, but thinking to carry it off with a high air, "she went out, this very morning to buy one."

With all his easy nonchalance, however, Mr. Bentley carried a sad heart in his bosom; for his expenses greatly exceeded his income, and he was rapidly going to ruin. For years he had carried on business by borrowing from day to day; by discounts from banks; or by loans on temporary mortgages of his fine furniture. Often, on looking back at the end of the year, he wondered how he had managed to get through. But, in some respects, Mr. Bentley was an extraordinary man. Among other things, he was the perfection of plausibility. Few men could borrow money with more grace, and still fewer, it must be owned, could pay it with less punctuality. The world, however, is full of dupes, and in a large city, a man like Mr. Bentley can go on, for many a year, without exhausting his victims.

"My dear," said Mrs. Bentley to her spouse, "we must give a ball on Ada's birth-night."

"Really," answered Mr. Bentley, "I'm afraid it can't be done, Eliza. I'm shockingly short."

"I know that," was the reply, "you're always short of course. Men with a large family like yours are necessarily short. But when the girls are married, there needn't be such occasion for spending money; we can economize then, you know. Now Ada will be eighteen next month, and young Howard is debating a proposal: a ball, I'm sure, will bring him to the point."

"You think he's serious? Old Howard is as rich as a Jew, and it would be a splendid match. But, unless the son is really in earnest, I shouldn't be willing to go to the expense of a ball, just now. Honestly, Eliza, I don't see how I'm to get through next month."

"I don't think there's the least doubt that a ball would settle the affair. Ada looks charmingly in a ball dress, but as the Howards are among our old families, who are very exclusive, her lover hasn't had a chance to see her in one, for they haven't met at a ball since their acquaintance."

"Well, well," said Mr. Bentley, somewhat impatiently, "do as you please. If Ada had old Howard for a father-in-law, perhaps one might ——"

But Mr. Bentley did not finish the sentence. Even he, sanguine and plausible as he was, doubted whether the elder Howard was the man to be his dupe, so he broke off into a whistle, and left the room a moment after.

Mrs. Bentley lost no time in preparing for the ball, which she determined should be the most brilliant of the season. She had long wished to get into the Howard set, and now seized the opportunity to invite several ladies, members of

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it, whom she had met in the summer at Saratoga. Her acquaintance with them did not, indeed, warrant such a liberty; but as young Mr. Howard was coming, she hoped they would come also: at any rate she resolved to make a bold push, or what she called, in her Anglo-Saxon French, "*koop de mane.*"

Enormous bills for the ball now began to come in, for nobody would supply the Bentleys without the cash in advance. Poor Mr. Bentley was driven to his wit's ends to find means to liquidate these accounts. In one or two cases, he called personally with his order, hoping that it would be filled if part of the amount was paid; but confectioners, florists, and wine merchants were, by this time, pretty well acquainted with their customer; and not a pound of cake, a solitary bouquet, or a single bottle of wine could Mr. Bentley obtain without, as the inexorable dealers phrased it, "cash in hand."

Two days before the ball, Mr. Bentley went, in despair, to a monied acquaintance, offering to pledge his furniture for an advance of a thousand dollars.

"You can go with me to the house, this morning," he said, "at the hour when Mrs. Bentley and Ada receive visitors, and examine the things, on a pretence of sauntering about the rooms with me to look at the pictures."

The bargain was struck, for the terms offered, by the desperate husband, were liberal; and accordingly, at the usual time when Mrs. Bentley and her daughter, in their most elegant morning costume, received visitors, the husband made his appearance with his companion, whom he introduced as a friend he was desirous the ladies should know: and then, after some brief chat with the mistress of the house, the two rose and walked about the rooms. Little did young Mr. Howard, as he conversed in whispers with Ada, think that Mr. Bentley and his companion, as they sauntered around, talking in a low tone, and looking at pictures, statuettes and other articles of *virtu*, or occasionally pausing by a magnificent piano or *console*, were discussing a mortgage of all this superb furniture. But stranger scenes occur, almost weekly, on the Fifth Avenue, or out Walnut street, among those who are "keeping up appearances."

The day of the ball came at last. Servants had been busy all day in transforming the Bentley's mansion into an *impromptu* palace of fairy land. The hall was crowded with rare exotics; the reception rooms were ornamented with the costliest bouquets; and the conservatory, at the end of the suite, was fragrant with the finest specimens from the hot-house of Buist. The supper table was laid for three hundred guests. Every delicacy of the season—the choicest game, the most exquisite wines—was in preparation for the evening. Ada, in whose honor all this expense had been incurred, was already under the hands of a dressing-maid, her elaborate attire lying displayed upon the bed, while the exulting mother stood by flattering her on her beauty.

We have neglected to describe the daughter. But it is a task that will not detain us long. Miss Bentley was silly, selfish and conceited; in looks a vapid doll; in manners a piece of sentimental affectation. She despised her parents, because she knew just enough to detect their ignorance, and knew too little to feel how much she owed to them, who to her at least had ever been indulgent. Her whole thoughts, at this particular juncture, were devoted to securing her lover. Not that she had the least bit of affection for him. But he was rich; he was of an old family; he was handsome, well-bred and popular: and there was not enough heart in this vain creature to pause at the sacrilege of marriage without love.

"Everything is ready, my dear," said Mrs. Bentley. "You had better finish dressing. The company will soon begin to arrive. I wonder what can keep your papa."

"Oh! papa is never punctual, you know," carelessly replied the young lady. "It's provoking, however, he isn't here, for he'll hardly have time to dress."

An hour later, and mother and daughter stood ready to receive their guests, who might now be expected to arrive every minute. The parlors were blazing with light; the white-gloved servants were on the staircase; and the band of music for the waltzers had arranged its temporary orchestra and waited the opening of the ball. Everything was prepared for the festival, except the presence of the host. Mr. Bentley, strange to say, had not yet come home, and his wife began to grow anxious, as her face plainly showed. More than once Mrs. Bentley whispered her alarm to her child, but Ada was in such a flutter of selfish vanity that she could not participate in her mother's fears, and her invariable reply was that "papa would be home, by-and-bye; he was never punctual."

And now the guests began to arrive. Mrs. Bentley, wearing her blandest smiles, received arrival after arrival, and forgot, for a time, in the excitement, the unaccountable absence of her husband. But as the evening wore on, without his return, her anxiety began to return. Yet she still smiled and smiled, striving to "keep up appearances."

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By-and-bye she noticed also that many persons who had been invited, and even sent acceptances, had not arrived. Young Mr. Howard himself was missing. People, too, began to gather in little groups, and to whisper together, glancing at her and Ada: but, if she approached, they suddenly ceased, and with evident embarrassment. What could it all mean?

She was not left in doubt long. While the music was at its loudest, and the waltzers in their giddiest whirl, a pale, horror-stricken face appeared in one of the doorways, and beckoned for Mrs. Bentley. The owner of that face was her sole surviving brother, a man never seen at her gay parties ordinarily, and whose presence, therefore, was a proof of some dire necessity.

The band stopped, the waltzers ceased revolving, and a general rush to the door was followed by a universal cry of terror. For, coming up the hall, borne on a settee, was the corpse of Mr. Bentley, the broken merchant, the discovered felon, the suicide.

Yes! that was the end of all. A few weeks before, in the hope of retrieving himself by one bold stroke, Mr. Bentley had entered into a heavy stock speculation. But stocks had fallen, almost from that hour. On this day, large liabilities had matured, growing out of the speculation; and being unable to meet them, he had, in a moment of desperation, committed a forgery. The crime had been almost immediately discovered. Mr. Bentley had made a vain attempt to fly. But, being followed to his hiding, he had, when he heard the officers on the stairs, taken his own life.

The guests dispersed like affrighted birds, when the hawk pounces upon one of their number. In half an hour, the mansion, so lately brilliant with light and reeling with music, was dark, and still, and silent as the grave.

Mrs. Bentley now keeps a third-rate boarding-house. Her daughter is still unmarried, and almost useless, for she is peevish and in ill-health, and is always complaining of their misfortunes. And thus ends one tragedy, the result of living to KEEP UP APPEARANCES.

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